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BOSWELL'S LIFE OF JOHNSON



Nov. 1882

Lichfield Cathedral.

BOSWELL'S
LIFE OF JOHNSON

EDITED BY
AUGUSTINE BIRRELL

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THE LIFE OF SAMUEL JOHNSON, LL.D.

IN 1772 he was altogether quiescent as an author ; but it will be found, from the various evidences which I shall bring together, that his mind was acute, lively, and vigorous.

TO SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS

‘DEAR SIR,—Be pleased to send to Mr. Banks, whose place of residence I do not know, this note, which I have sent open, that, if you please, you may read it.

‘When you send it do not use your own seal.—I am, sir,
your most humble servant, SAM. JOHNSON.

‘Feb. 27, 1772.’

TO JOSEPH BANKS, ESQ.

“*Perpetua ambita bis terra præmia lactis
Hæc habet altrici Capra secundo Jovis.*”¹

‘SIR,—I return thanks to you and to Dr. Solander for the pleasure which I received in yesterday’s conversation. I could not recollect a motto for your Goat, but have given her

¹ Thus translated by a friend :

‘In fame scarce second to the nurse of Jove,
This Goat, who twice the world had traversed round,
Deserving both her master’s care and love,
Ease and perpetual pasture now has found.’

one. You, sir, may perhaps have an epic poem from some happier pen than, sir, your most humble servant,

‘SAM. JOHNSON.

‘*Johnson’s Court, Fleet Street,*
‘*Feb. 27, 1772.*’

TO DR. JOHNSON

‘MY DEAR SIR,—It is hard that I cannot prevail on you to write to me oftener. But I am convinced that it is in vain to expect from you a private correspondence with any regularity. I must, therefore, look upon you as a fountain of wisdom, from whence few rills are communicated to a distance, and which must be approached at its source to partake fully of its virtues.

‘I am coming to London soon, and am to appear in an appeal from the Court of Session in the House of Lords. A school-master in Scotland was, by a court of inferior jurisdiction, deprived of his office, for being somewhat severe in the chastisement of his scholars. The Court of Session considering it to be dangerous to the interest of learning and education to lessen the dignity of teachers, and make them afraid of too indulgent parents, instigated by the complaints of their children, restored him. His enemies have appealed to the House of Lords, though the salary is only twenty pounds a year. I was Counsel for him here. I hope there will be little fear of a reversal; but I must beg to have your aid in my plan of supporting the decree. It is a general question, and not a point of particular law.

‘I am, etc.,

JAMES BOSWELL.’

TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

‘DEAR SIR,—That you are coming so soon to town I am very glad; and still more glad that you are coming as an advocate. I think nothing more likely to make your life pass happily away than the consciousness of your own value, which eminence in your profession will certainly confer. If I can give you any collateral help, I hope you do not suspect that

it will be wanting. My kindness for you has neither the merit of singular virtue, nor the reproach of singular prejudice. Whether to love you be right or wrong I have many on my side: Mrs. Thrale loves you, and Mrs. Williams loves you, and what would have inclined me to love you, if I had been neutral before, you are a great favourite of Dr. Beattie.

‘Of Dr. Beattie I should have thought much, but that his lady puts him out of my head: she is a very lovely woman.

‘The ejection which you come hither to oppose appears very cruel, unreasonable, and oppressive. I should think there could not be much doubt of your success.

‘My health grows better, yet I am not fully recovered. I believe it is held that men do not recover very fast after three-score. I hope yet to see Beattie’s College: and have not given up the western voyage. But however all this may be or not, let us try to make each other happy when we meet, and not refer our pleasure to distant times or distant places.

‘How comes it that you tell me nothing of your lady? I hope to see her some time, and till then shall be glad to hear of her.—I am, dear sir, etc.,

SAM. JOHNSON.

‘March 15, 1772.’

TO BENNET LANGTON, ESQ., NEAR SPILSBY,
LINCOLNSHIRE

‘DEAR SIR,—I congratulate you and Lady Rothes¹ on your little man, and hope you will all be many years happy together.

‘Poor Miss Langton can have little part in the joy of her family. She this day called her aunt Langton to receive the sacrament with her; and made me talk yesterday on such subjects as suit her condition. It will probably be her *viaticum*. I surely need not mention again that she wishes to see her mother.—I am, sir, your most humble servant,

‘SAM. JOHNSON.

‘March 14, 1772.’

¹ [Mr. Langton married, May 24, 1770, Jane, the daughter of — Lloyd, Esq., and widow of John, Earl of Rothes, many years Commander-in-chief of the Forces in Ireland, who died in 1767.—M.]

On the 21st of March, I was happy to find myself again in my friend's study, and was glad to see my old acquaintance, Mr. Francis Barber, who was now returned home. Dr. Johnson received me with a hearty welcome, saying, 'I am glad you are come, and glad you are come upon such an errand' (alluding to the cause of the schoolmaster). BOSWELL: 'I hope, sir, he will be in no danger. It is a very delicate matter to interfere between a master and his scholars: nor do I see how you can fix the degree of severity that a master may use.' JOHNSON: 'Why, sir, till you can fix the degree of obstinacy and negligence of the scholars, you cannot fix the degree of severity of the master. Severity must be continued until obstinacy be subdued, and negligence be cured.' He mentioned the severity of Hunter, his own master. 'Sir (said I), Hunter is a Scotch name: so it should seem this schoolmaster who beat you so severely was a Scotsman. I can now account for your prejudice against the Scotch.' JOHNSON: 'Sir, he was not Scotch; and, abating his brutality, he was a very good master.'

We talked of his two political pamphlets, *The False Alarm*, and *Thoughts concerning Falkland's Islands*. JOHNSON: 'Well, sir, which of them did you think the best?' BOSWELL: 'I liked the second best.' JOHNSON: 'Why, sir, I liked the first best; and Beattie liked the first best. Sir, there is a subtlety of disquisition in the first that is worth all the fire of the second.' BOSWELL: 'Pray, sir, is it true that Lord North paid you a visit, and that you got two hundred a year in addition to your pension?' JOHNSON: 'No, sir. Except what I had from the bookseller, I did not get a farthing by them. And, between you and me, I believe Lord North is no friend to me.' BOSWELL:

‘How so, sir?’ JOHNSON: ‘Why, sir, you cannot account for the fancies of men.—Well, how does Lord Elibank? and how does Lord Monboddo?’ BOSWELL: ‘Very well, sir. Lord Monboddo still maintains the superiority of the savage life.’ JOHNSON: ‘What strange narrowness of mind now is that, to think the things we have not known are better than the things which we have known!’ BOSWELL: ‘Why, sir, that is a common prejudice.’ JOHNSON: ‘Yes, sir, but a common prejudice should not be found in one whose trade is to rectify error.’

A gentleman having come in who was to go as a mate in the ship along with Mr. Banks and Dr. Solander, Dr. Johnson asked what were the names of the ships destined for the expedition. The gentleman answered, they were once to be called the *Drake* and the *Raleigh*, but now they were to be called the *Resolution* and the *Adventure*. JOHNSON: ‘Much better, for had the *Raleigh* returned without going round the world, it would have been ridiculous. To give them the names of the *Drake* and the *Raleigh* was laying a trap for satire.’ BOSWELL: ‘Had not you some desire to go upon this expedition, sir?’ JOHNSON: ‘Why, yes, but I soon laid it aside. Sir, there is very little of intellectual in the course. Besides, I see but at a small distance. So it was not worth my while to go to see birds fly, which I should not have seen fly; and fishes swim, which I should not have seen swim.’

The gentleman being gone, and Dr. Johnson having left the room for some time, a debate arose between the Reverend Mr. Stockdale and Mrs. Desmoulins, whether Mr. Banks and Dr. Solander were entitled to any share of glory from their expedition. When Dr.

Johnson returned to us, I told him the subject of their dispute. JOHNSON: 'Why, sir, it was properly for botany that they went out: I believe they thought only of culling of simples.'

I thanked him for showing civilities to Beattie. 'Sir (said he), I should thank *you*. We all love Beattie. Mrs. Thrale says, if ever she has another husband, she'll have Beattie. He sunk upon us¹ that he was married; else we should have shown his lady more civilities. She is a very fine woman. But how can you show civilities to a nonentity? I did not think he had been married. Nay, I did not think about it one way or other, but he did not tell us of his lady till late.'

¹ TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

'*Edinburgh, May 3, 1792.*

'MY DEAR SIR,—As I suppose your great work will soon be reprinted, I beg leave to trouble you with a remark on a passage of it, in which I am a little misrepresented. Be not alarmed; the misrepresentation is not imputable to you. Not having the book at hand, I cannot specify the page, but I suppose you will easily find it. Dr. Johnson says, speaking of Mrs. Thrale's family: "Dr. Beattie *sunk upon us*, that he was married," or words to that purpose. I am not sure that I understand *sunk upon us*, which is a very uncommon phrase: but it seems to me to imply (and others, I find, have understood it in the same sense), *studiously concealed from us his being married*. Now, sir, this was by no means the case. I could have no motive to conceal a circumstance, of which I never was nor can be ashamed; and of which Dr. Johnson seemed to think, when he afterwards became acquainted with Mrs. Beattie, that I had, as was true, reason to be proud. So far was I from concealing her, that my wife had at that time almost as numerous an acquaintance in London as I had myself; and was, not very long after, kindly invited and elegantly entertained at Streatham by Mr. and Mrs. Thrale.

'My request, therefore, is that you would rectify this matter in your new edition. You are at liberty to make what use you please of this letter.

'My best wishes ever attend you and your family. Believe me to be, with the utmost regard and esteem, dear sir, your obliged and affectionate humble servant,
J. BEATTIE.'

I have, from my respect for my friend Dr. Beattie, and regard to his extreme sensibility, inserted the foregoing letter, though I cannot but wonder at his considering as any imputation a phrase commonly used among the best friends.

He then spoke of St. Kilda, the most remote of the Hebrides. I told him I thought of buying it. JOHNSON: 'Pray do, sir. We will go and pass a winter amid the blasts there. We shall have fine fish, and we will take some dried tongues with us, and some books. We will have a strong-built vessel, and some Orkney men to navigate her. We must build a tolerable house; but we may carry with us a wooden house ready made, and requiring nothing but to be put up. Consider, sir, by buying St. Kilda, you may keep the people from falling into worse hands. We must give them a clergyman, and he shall be one of Beattie's choosing. He shall be educated at Marischal College. I'll be your Lord Chancellor, or what you please.' BOSWELL: 'Are you serious, sir, in advising me to buy St. Kilda? for if you should advise me to go to Japan, I believe I should do it.' JOHNSON: 'Why yes, sir, I am serious.' BOSWELL: 'Why, then, I'll see what can be done.'

I gave him an account of the two parties in the Church of Scotland, those for supporting the rights of patrons, independent of the people, and those against it. JOHNSON: 'It should be settled one way or other. I cannot wish well to a popular election of the clergy, when I consider that it occasions such animosities, such unworthy courting of the people, such slanders between the contending parties, and other disadvantages. It is enough to allow the people to remonstrate against the nomination of a minister for solid reasons.' (I suppose he meant heresy or immorality.)

He was engaged to dine abroad, and asked me to return to him in the evening at nine, which I accordingly did.

We drank tea with Mrs. Williams, who told us a story of second sight, which happened in Wales, where she was born. He listened to it very attentively, and said he should be glad to have some instances of that faculty well authenticated. His elevated wish for more and more evidence for spirit, in opposition to the grovelling belief of materialism, led him to a love of such mysterious disquisitions. He again justly observed, that we could have no certainty of the truth of supernatural appearances, unless something was told us which we could not know by ordinary means, or something done which could not be done but by supernatural power; that Pharaoh in reason and justice required such evidence from Moses; nay, that our Saviour said, 'If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin.' He had said in the morning that Macaulay's *History of St. Kilda* was very well written, except some foppery about liberty and slavery. I mentioned to him that Macaulay told me he was advised to leave out of his book the wonderful story that upon the approach of a stranger all the inhabitants catch cold;¹ but that it had been so well authenticated, he determined to retain it. JOHNSON: 'Sir, to leave things out of a book, merely because people tell you they will not be believed, is meanness. Macaulay acted with more magnanimity.'

We talked of the Roman Catholic religion, and how little difference there was in essential matters between ours and it. JOHNSON: 'True, sir, all denominations of Christians have really little difference in

¹ See vol. ii. p. 204.

point of doctrine, though they may differ widely in external forms. There is a prodigious difference between the external form of one of your Presbyterian churches in Scotland and a church in Italy, yet the doctrine taught is essentially the same.'

I mentioned the petition to Parliament for removing the subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles. JOHNSON : 'It was soon thrown out. Sir, they talk of not making boys at the University subscribe to what they do not understand ; but they ought to consider that our Universities were founded to bring up members for the Church of England, and we must not supply our enemies with arms from our arsenal. No, sir, the meaning of subscribing is, not that they fully understand all the articles, but that they will adhere to the Church of England. Now, take it in this way, and suppose that they should only subscribe their adherence to the Church of England, there would be still the same difficulty ; for still the young men would be subscribing to what they do not understand. For if you should ask them, What do you mean by the Church of England ? Do you know in what it differs from the Presbyterian Church ? from the Romish Church ? from the Greek Church ? from the Coptic Church ? they could not tell you. So, sir, it comes to the same thing.' BOSWELL : 'But, would it not be sufficient to subscribe the Bible ?' JOHNSON : 'Why, no, sir ; for all sects will subscribe the Bible ; nay, the Mahometans will subscribe the Bible ; for the Mahometans acknowledge Jesus Christ, as well as Moses, but maintain that God sent Mahomet as a still greater prophet than either.'

I mentioned the motion which had been made in the

House of Commons to abolish the fast of the 30th of January. JOHNSON: 'Why, sir, I could have wished that it had been a temporary act, perhaps, to have expired with the century. I am against abolishing it; because that would be declaring it wrong to establish it; but I should have no objection to make an Act, continuing it for another century, and then letting it expire.'¹

He disapproved of the Royal Marriage Bill, 'Because (said he), I would not have the people think that the validity of marriage depends on the will of man, or that the right of a king depends on the will of man. I should not have been against making the marriage of any of the Royal Family without the approbation of King and Parliament, highly criminal.'

In the morning we had talked of old families, and the respect due to them. JOHNSON: 'Sir, you have a right to that kind of respect, and are arguing for yourself. I am for supporting the principle, and am disinterested in doing it, as I have no such right.' BOSWELL: 'Why, sir, it is one more incitement to a man to do well.' JOHNSON: 'Yes, sir, and it is a matter of opinion very necessary to keep society together. What is it but opinion, by which we have a respect for authority, that prevents us, who are the rabble, from rising up and pulling down you who are gentlemen from your places, and saying, "We will be gentlemen in our turn"? Now, sir, that respect for authority is much more easily granted to a man whose father has had it, than to an upstart, and so society is more easily supported.' BOSWELL: 'Perhaps, sir, it

¹ [It was abolished in 1859.—A. B.]

might be done by the respect belonging to office, as among the Romans, where the dress, the *toga*, inspired reverence.' JOHNSON: 'Why, we know very little about the Romans. But surely it is much easier to respect a man who has always had respect, than to respect a man who we know was last year no better than ourselves, and will be no better next year. In republics there is no respect for authority, but a fear of power.' BOSWELL: 'At present, sir, I think riches seem to gain most respect.' JOHNSON: 'No, sir, riches do not gain hearty respect; they only procure external attention. A very rich man from low beginnings, may buy his election in a borough; but *cæteris paribus*, a man of family will be preferred. People will prefer a man for whose father their fathers have voted, though they should get no more money, or even less. That shows that the respect for family is not merely fanciful, but has an actual operation. If gentlemen of family would allow the rich upstarts to spend their money profusely, which they are ready enough to do, and not vie with them in expense, the upstarts would soon be at an end, and the gentlemen would remain; but if the gentlemen will vie in expense with the upstarts, which is very foolish, they must be ruined.'

I gave him an account of the excellent mimicry of a friend of mine in Scotland; observing at the same time that some people thought it a very mean thing. JOHNSON: 'Why, sir, it is making a very mean use of man's powers. But to be a good mimic requires great powers; great acuteness of observation, great retention of what is observed, and great pliancy of organs, to represent what is observed. I remember a

lady of quality in this town, Lady — —, who was a wonderful mimic, and used to make me laugh immoderately. I have heard she is now gone mad.' BOSWELL: 'It is amazing how a mimic can not only give you the gestures and voice of a person whom he represents; but even what a person would say on any particular subject.' JOHNSON: 'Why, sir, you are to consider that the manner and some particular phrases of a person do much to impress you with an idea of him, and you are not sure that he would say what the mimic says in his character.' BOSWELL: 'I don't think Foote a good mimic, sir.' JOHNSON: 'No, sir, his imitations are not like. He gives you something different from himself, but not the character which he means to assume. He goes out of himself without going into other people. He cannot take off any person unless he is strongly marked, such as George Faulkner. He is like a painter who can draw the portrait of a man who has a wen upon his face, and who therefore is easily known. If a man hops upon one leg Foote can hop upon one leg. But he has not that nice discrimination which your friend seems to possess. Foote is, however, very entertaining with a kind of conversation between wit and buffoonery.'

On Monday, March 23, I found him busy, preparing a fourth edition of his folio dictionary. Mr. Peyton, one of his original amanuenses, was writing for him. I put him in mind of a meaning of the word *side*, which he had omitted, viz., relationship, as father's side, mother's side. He inserted it. I asked him if *humiliating* was a good word. He said he had seen it frequently used, but he did not know it to be legitimate English. He would not admit

civilisation, but only *civility*. With great deference to him I thought *civilisation*, from *to civilise*, better in the sense opposed to *barbarity*, than *civility*; as it is better to have a distinct word for each sense, than one word with two senses, which *civility* is in his way of using it.

He seemed also to be intent on some sort of chemical operation. I was entertained by observing how he contrived to send Mr. Peyton on an errand, without seeming to degrade him: 'Mr. Peyton,—Mr. Peyton, will you be so good as to take a walk to Temple Bar? You will there see a chemist's shop, at which you will be pleased to buy for me an ounce of oil of vitriol; not spirit of vitriol, but oil of vitriol. It will cost three half-pence.' Peyton immediately went, and returned with it, and told him it cost but a penny.

I then reminded him of the schoolmaster's cause, and proposed to read to him the printed papers concerning it. 'No, sir (said he), I can read quicker than I can hear.' So he read them to himself.

After he had read for some time we were interrupted by the entrance of Mr. Kristom, a Swede, who was tutor to some young gentleman in the city. He told me that there was a very good History of Sweden by Daline. Having at that time an intention of writing the history of that country, I asked Dr. Johnson whether one might write a history of Sweden without going thither. 'Yes, sir (said he), one for common use.'

We talked of languages. Johnson observed that Leibnitz had made some progress in a work, tracing all languages up to the Hebrew. 'Why, sir (said he), you would not imagine that the French *jour*, day, is

derived from the Latin *dies*, and yet nothing is more certain; and the intermediate steps are very clear. From *dies* comes *diurnus*. *Diu* is, by inaccurate ears, or inaccurate pronunciation, easily confounded with *giu*; then the Italians form a substantive of the ablative of an adjective, and thence *giurno*, or, as they make it, *giorno*: which is readily contracted into *giour* or *jour*.' He observed that the Bohemian language was true Sclavonic. The Swede said it had some similarity with the German. JOHNSON: 'Why, sir, to be sure, such parts of Sclavonia as confine with Germany will borrow German words; and such parts as confine with Tartary will borrow Tartar words.'

He said he never had it properly ascertained that the Scotch Highlanders and the Irish understood each other. I told him that my cousin, Colonel Graham, of the Royal Highlanders, whom I met at Drogheda, told me they did. JOHNSON: 'Sir, if the Highlanders understood Irish, why translate the New Testament into Erse, as was lately done at Edinburgh, when there is an Irish translation?' BOSWELL: 'Although the Erse and Irish are both dialects of the same language, there may be a good deal of diversity between them, as between the different dialects in Italy.' The Swede went away, and Mr. Johnson continued his reading of the papers. I said, 'I am afraid, sir, it is troublesome.' 'Why, sir (said he), I do not take much delight in it; but I'll go through it.'

We went to the Mitre, and dined in the room where he and I first supped together. He gave me great hopes of my cause. 'Sir (said he), the government of a schoolmaster is somewhat of the nature of military

government; that is to say, it must be arbitrary, it must be exercised by the will of one man, according to particular circumstances. You must show some learning upon this occasion. You must show that a schoolmaster has a prescriptive right to beat; and that an action of assault and battery cannot be admitted against him, unless there is some great excess, some barbarity. This man has maimed none of his boys. They are all left with the full exercise of their corporeal faculties. In our schools in England many boys have been maimed; yet I never heard of an action against a schoolmaster on that account. Puffendorff, I think, maintains the right of a schoolmaster to beat his scholars.'

On Saturday, March 27, I introduced to him Sir Alexander Macdonald, with whom he had expressed a wish to be acquainted. He received him very courteously.

Sir Alexander observed that the Chancellors in England are chosen from views much inferior to the office, being chosen from temporary political views. JOHNSON: 'Why, sir, in such a government as ours, no man is appointed to an office because he is the fittest for it, nor hardly in any other government; because there are so many connections and dependencies to be studied. A despotic prince may choose a man to an office merely because he is the fittest for it. The King of Prussia may do it.' SIR A.: 'I think, sir, almost all great lawyers, such at least as have written upon law, have known only law, and nothing else.' JOHNSON: 'Why no, sir; Judge Hale was a great lawyer, and wrote upon law; and yet he knew a great many other things, and has written upon

other things. Selden too.' SIR A.: 'Very true, sir, and Lord Bacon. But was not Lord Coke a mere lawyer?' JOHNSON: 'Why, I am afraid he was; but he would have taken it very ill if you had told him so. He would have prosecuted you for scandal.' BOSWELL: 'Lord Mansfield is not a mere lawyer.' JOHNSON: 'No, sir, I never was in Lord Mansfield's company; but Lord Mansfield was distinguished at the University. Lord Mansfield, when he first came to town, "drank champagne with the wits," as Prior says. He was the friend of Pope.' SIR A.: 'Barristers, I believe, are not so abusive now as they were formerly. I fancy they had less law long ago, and so were obliged to take to abuse to fill up the time. Now they have such a number of precedents they have no occasion for abuse.' JOHNSON: 'Nay, sir, they had more law long ago than they have now. As to precedents, to be sure they will increase in course of time; but the more precedents there are the less occasion is there for law; that is to say, the less occasion is there for investigating principles.' SIR A.: 'I have been correcting several Scotch accents in my friend Boswell. I doubt, sir, if any Scotchman ever attains to a perfect English pronunciation.' JOHNSON: 'Why, sir, few of them do, because they do not persevere after acquiring a certain degree of it. But, sir, there can be no doubt that they may attain to a perfect English pronunciation, if they will. We find how near they come to it; and certainly, a man who conquers nineteen parts of the Scottish accent, may conquer the twentieth. But, sir, when a man has got the better of nine-tenths he grows weary, he relaxes his diligence, he finds he has corrected his

accent so far as not to be disagreeable, and he no longer desires his friends to tell him when he is wrong; nor does he choose to be told. Sir, when people watch me narrowly, and I do not watch myself, they will find me out to be of a particular county. In the same manner Dunning may be found out to be a Devonshire man. So most Scotchmen may be found out. But, sir, little aberrations are of no disadvantage. I never caught Mallet in a Scotch accent; and yet Mallet, I suppose, was past five-and-twenty before he came to London.'

Upon another occasion I talked to him on this subject, having myself taken some pains to improve my pronunciation, by the aid of the late Mr. Love of Drury Lane theatre, when he was a player at Edinburgh, and also of old Mr. Sheridan. Johnson said to me, 'Sir, your pronunciation is not offensive.' With this concession I was pretty well satisfied; and let me give my countrymen of North Britain an advice not to aim at absolute perfection in this respect; not to speak *High English*, as we are apt to call what is far removed from the *Scotch*, but which is by no means *good English*, and makes 'the fools who use it' truly ridiculous. Good English is plain, easy, and smooth in the mouth of an unaffected English gentleman. A studied and factitious pronunciation, which requires perpetual attention, and imposes perpetual constraint, is exceedingly disgusting. A small intermixture of provincial peculiarities may, perhaps, have an agreeable effect, as the notes of different birds concur in the harmony of the grove, and please more than if they were all exactly alike. I could name some gentlemen of Ireland, to whom a slight proportion of

the accent and recitative of that country is an advantage. The same observation will apply to the gentlemen of Scotland. I do not mean that we should speak as broad as a certain prosperous member of Parliament from that country; though it has been well observed, that 'it has been of no small use to him; as it rouses the attention of the House by its uncommonness: and is equal to tropes and figures in a good English speaker.' I would give as an instance of what I mean to recommend to my countrymen, the pronunciation of the late Sir Gilbert Elliot; and may I presume to add that of the present Earl of Marchmont, who told me, with great good humour, that the master of a shop in London, where he was not known, said to him, 'I suppose, sir, you are an American.' 'Why so, sir?' (said his Lordship). 'Because, sir (replied the shopkeeper), you speak neither English nor Scotch, but something different from both, which I conclude is the language of America.'

BOSWELL: 'It may be of use, sir, to have a dictionary to ascertain the pronunciation.' JOHNSON: 'Why, sir, my Dictionary shows you the accent of words, if you can but remember them.' BOSWELL: 'But, sir, we want marks to ascertain the pronunciation of the vowels. Sheridan, I believe, has finished such a work.' JOHNSON: 'Why, sir, consider how much easier it is to learn a language by the ear than by any marks. Sheridan's Dictionary may do very well; but you cannot always carry it about with you: and, when you want the word, you have not the dictionary. It is like a man who has a sword that will not draw. It is an admirable sword, to be sure: but while your enemy is cutting your throat you are unable to use it.'

Besides, sir, what entitles Sheridan to fix the pronunciation of English? He has, in the first place, the disadvantage of being an Irishman : and if he says he will fix it after the example of the best company, why, they differ among themselves. I remember an instance : when I published the Plan for my Dictionary, Lord Chesterfield told me that the word *great* should be pronounced so as to rhyme to *state* ; and Sir William Yonge sent me word that it should be pronounced so as to rhyme to *seat*, and that none but an Irishman would pronounce it *grait*. Now here were two men of the highest rank, the one the best speaker in the House of Lords, the other the best speaker in the House of Commons, differing entirely.'

I again visited him at night. Finding him in a very good humour I ventured to lead him to the subject of our situation in a future state, having much curiosity to know his notions on that point. JOHNSON : 'Why, sir, the happiness of an unembodied spirit will consist in a consciousness of the favour of God, in the contemplation of truth, and in the possession of felicitating ideas.' BOSWELL : 'But, sir, is there any harm in our forming to ourselves conjectures as to the particulars of our happiness, though the Scripture has said but very little on the subject? "We know not what we shall be."' JOHNSON : 'Sir, there is no harm. What philosophy suggests to us on this topic is probable : what Scripture tells us is certain. Dr. Henry More has carried it as far as philosophy can. You may buy both his theological and philosophical works in two volumes folio for about eight shillings.' BOSWELL : 'One of the most pleasing thoughts is, that we shall

see our friends again.’¹ JOHNSON: ‘Yes, sir; but you must consider, that when we are become purely rational, many of our friendships will be cut off. Many friendships are formed by a community of sensual pleasures: all these will be cut off. We form many friendships with bad men, because they have agreeable qualities, and they can be useful to us; but, after death, they can no longer be of use to us. We form many friendships by mistake, imagining people to be different from what they really are. After death, we shall see every one in a true light. Then, sir, they talk of our meeting our relations: but then all relationship is dissolved; and we shall have no regard for one person more than another, but for their real value. However, we shall either have the satisfaction of meeting our friends, or be satisfied without meeting them.’ BOSWELL: ‘Yet, sir, we see in Scripture that Dives still retained an anxious concern about his brethren.’ JOHNSON: ‘Why, sir, we must either suppose that passage to be metaphorical, or hold with many divines, and all the Purgatorians, that departed souls do not all at once arrive at the utmost perfection of which they are capable.’ BOSWELL: ‘I think, sir, that is a very rational supposition.’ JOHNSON: ‘Why yes, sir; but we do not know it is a true one. There is no harm in believing it: but you must not compel others to make it an article of faith; for it is not revealed.’ BOSWELL: ‘Do you think, sir, it is wrong in a man who holds the doctrine of Purgatory to pray for the souls of his deceased friends?’ JOHNSON:

¹ [Bishop Hall, in his Epistle, ‘discoursing of the different degrees of heavenly glory, and of our mutual knowledge of each other above (Dec. iii. c. 6), holds the affirmative on both these questions.—M.]

‘Why no, sir.’ BOSWELL: ‘I have been told, that in the Liturgy of the Episcopal Church of Scotland there was a form of prayer for the dead.’ JOHNSON: ‘Sir, it is not in the Liturgy which Laud framed for the Episcopal Church of Scotland: if there is a liturgy older than that I should be glad to see it.’ BOSWELL: ‘As to our employment in a future state, the sacred writings say little. The Revelation, however, of St. John gives us many ideas, and particularly mentions music.’ JOHNSON: ‘Why, sir, ideas must be given you by means of something which you know: and as to music there are some philosophers and divines who have maintained that we shall not be spiritualised to such a degree, but that something of matter, very much refined, will remain. In that case, music may make a part of our future felicity.’

BOSWELL: ‘I do not know whether there are any well-attested stories of the appearance of ghosts. You know there is a famous story of the appearance of Mrs. Veal, prefixed to “Drelincourt on Death.”’ JOHNSON: ‘I believe, sir, that is given up. I believe the woman declared upon her death-bed that it was a lie.’¹ BOSWELL: ‘This objection is made against the truth of ghosts appearing: that if they are in a state of happiness, it would be a punishment to them to return to this world; and if they are in a state of misery, it would be giving them a respite.’ JOHNSON: ‘Why,

¹ [This fiction is known to have been invented by Daniel Defoe, and was added to the second edition of the English translation of Drelin-court’s work, to make it sell. The first edition had it not.—M.]

[This is not quite accurate. Defoe’s pamphlet was published separately; first in 1706, and ran through three editions. It was added to the fourth edition of Drelincourt, but was omitted from some subsequent editions. After a time no edition of Drelincourt appeared without it. See Lee’s Defoe, vol. i. p. 127.—A. B.]

sir, as the happiness or misery of embodied spirits does not depend upon place, but is intellectual, we cannot say that they are less happy or less miserable by appearing on earth.'

We went down between twelve and one to Mrs. Williams's room and drank tea. I mentioned that we were to have the remains of Mr. Gray, in prose and verse, published by Mr. Mason. JOHNSON: 'I think we have had enough of Gray. I see they have published a splendid edition of Akenside's works. One bad ode may be suffered; but a number of them together makes one sick.' BOSWELL: 'Akenside's distinguished poem is his *'Pleasures of Imagination'*: but for my part, I never could admire it so much as most people do.' JOHNSON: 'Sir, I could not read it through.' BOSWELL: 'I have read it through; but I did not find any great power in it.'

I mentioned Elwal, the heretic, whose trial Sir John Pringle had given me to read. JOHNSON: 'Sir, Mr. Elwal was, I think, an ironmonger at Wolverhampton; and he had a mind to make himself famous, by being the founder of a new sect, which he wished much should be called *Elwallians*. He held that everything in the Old Testament that was not typical, was to be of perpetual observance: and so he wore a ribbon in the plaits of his coat, and he also wore a beard. I remember I had the honour of dining in company with Mr. Elwal. There was one Barter, a miller, who wrote against him; and you had the controversy between Mr. Elwal and Mr. Barter. To try to make himself distinguished he wrote a letter to King George the Second, challenging him to dispute with him, in which he said, 'George, if you be afraid

to come by yourself, to dispute with a poor old man, you may bring a thousand of your *black-guards* with you : and if you should still be afraid, you may bring a thousand of your *red-guards*.' The letter had something of the impudence of Junius to our present King. But the men of Wolverhampton were not so inflammable as the Common Council of London ; so Mr. Elwal failed in his scheme of making himself a man of great consequence.'

On Tuesday, March 31, he and I dined at General Paoli's. A question was started whether the state of marriage was natural to man. JOHNSON : ' Sir, it is so far from being natural for a man and woman to live in a state of marriage, that we find all the motives which they have for remaining in that connection, and the restraints which civilised society imposes to prevent separation, are hardly sufficient to keep them together.' The General said, that in a state of nature a man and woman uniting together, would form a strong and constant affection, by the mutual pleasure each would receive ; and that the same causes of dissension would not arise between them, as occur between husband and wife in a civilised state. JOHNSON : ' Sir, they would have dissensions enough, though of another kind. One would choose to go a-hunting in this wood, the other in that ; one would choose to go a-fishing in this lake, the other in that ; or, perhaps, one would choose to go a-hunting, when the other would choose to go a-fishing ; and so they would part. Besides, sir, a savage man and a savage woman meet by chance : and when the man sees another woman that pleases him better, he will leave the first.'

We then fell into a disquisition whether there

is any beauty independent of utility. The General maintained there was not. Dr. Johnson maintained that there was; and he instanced a coffee-cup which he held in his hand, the painting of which was of no real use, as the cup would hold the coffee equally well if plain; yet the painting was beautiful.

We talked of the strange custom of swearing in conversation. The General said, that all barbarous nations swore from a certain violence of temper, that could not be confined to earth, but was always reaching at the powers above. He said, too, that there was greater variety of swearing, in proportion as there was a greater variety of religious ceremonies.

Dr. Johnson went home with me to my lodgings in Conduit Street and drank tea, previous to our going to the Pantheon, which neither of us had seen before.

He said, 'Goldsmith's *Life of Parnell* is poor; not that it is poorly written, but that he had poor materials; for nobody can write the life of a man, but those who have ate and drunk and lived in social intercourse with him.'

I said that if it was not troublesome and presuming too much, I would request him to tell me all the little circumstances of his life; what schools he attended when he came to Oxford, when he came to London, etc. etc. He did not disapprove of my curiosity as to these particulars; but said, 'They'll come out by degrees, as we talk together.'

He censured Ruffhead's *Life of Pope*; and said, 'He knew nothing of Pope, and nothing of Poetry.' He praised Dr. Joseph Warton's *Essay on Pope*; but said, he supposed we should have no more of it, as the author had not been able to persuade the world to

think of Pope as he did. BOSWELL: 'Why, sir, should that prevent him from continuing his work? He is an ingenious Counsel, who has made the most of his cause; he is not obliged to gain it.' JOHNSON: 'But, sir, there is a difference, when the cause is of a man's own making.'

We talked of the proper use of riches. JOHNSON: 'If I were a man of great estate, I would drive all the rascals whom I did not like out of the county, at an election.'

I asked him how far he thought wealth should be employed in hospitality. JOHNSON: 'You are to consider that ancient hospitality, of which we hear so much, was in an uncommercial country, when men being idle, were glad to be entertained at rich men's tables. But in a commercial country, a busy country, time becomes precious, and therefore hospitality is not so much valued. No doubt there is still room for a certain degree of it; and a man has a satisfaction in seeing his friends eating and drinking around him. But promiscuous hospitality is not the way to gain real influence. You must help some people at table before others; you must ask some people how they like their wine oftener than others. You therefore offend more people than you please. You are like the French statesman,¹ who said, when he granted a favour, "*J'ai fait dix mécontents et un ingrat.*" Besides, sir, being entertained ever so well at a man's table, impresses no lasting regard or esteem. No, sir, the way to make sure of power and influence is, by lending money confidentially to your neighbours at a small

¹ [It was Louis XIV.—A. B.].

interest, or perhaps at no interest at all, and having their bonds in your possession.' BOSWELL: 'May not a man, sir, employ his riches to advantage, in educating young men of merit?' JOHNSON: 'Yes, sir, if they fall in your way; but if it be understood that you patronise young men of merit, you will be harassed with solicitations. You will have numbers forced upon you, who have no merit; some will force them upon you from mistaken partiality; and some from downright interested motives, without scruple; and you will be disgraced.'

'Were I a rich man I would propagate all kinds of trees that will grow in the open air. A green-house is childish. I would introduce foreign animals into the country; for instance, the reindeer.'¹

The conversation now turned on critical subjects. JOHNSON: 'Bayes, in the *Rehearsal*, is a mighty silly character. If it was intended to be like a particular man, it could only be diverting while that man was remembered. But I question whether it was meant for Dryden, as has been reported; for we know some of the passages said to be ridiculed were written since the *Rehearsal*; at least a passage mentioned in the Preface¹ is of a later date.' I maintained that it

¹ This project has since been realised. Sir Henry Liddell, who made a spirited tour into Lapland, brought two reindeer to his estate in Northumberland, where they bred: but the race has unfortunately perished.

² [There is no Preface to the *Rehearsal*, as originally published. Dr. Johnson seems to have meant the Address to the Reader with a Key subjoined to it; which have been prefixed to the modern editions of that play. He did not know, it appears, that several *additions* were made to the *Rehearsal* after the first edition. The ridicule on the passages here alluded to is found among these *additions*. They therefore furnish no ground for the doubt here suggested. Unquestionably Bayes was meant to be the representative of Dryden, whose familiar phrases in his ordinary conversation are frequently introduced in this piece.—M.]

had merit as a general satire on the self-importance of dramatic authors. But even in this light he held it very cheap.

We then walked to the Pantheon. The first view of it did not strike us so much as Ranelagh, of which he said, the '*coup d'œil*' was the finest thing he had ever seen.' The truth is, Ranelagh is of a more beautiful form; more of it, or rather indeed the whole *rotunda*, appears at once, and it is better lighted. However, as Johnson observed, we saw the Pantheon in time of mourning, when there was a dull uniformity; whereas he had seen Ranelagh when the view was enlivened with a gay profusion of colours. Mrs. Boswell of Gunthwait, in Yorkshire, joined us, and entered into conversation with us. Johnson said to me afterwards, 'Sir, this is a mighty intelligent lady.'

I said there was not half a guinea's worth of pleasure in seeing this place. JOHNSON: 'But, sir, there is half a guinea's worth of inferiority to other people in not having seen it.' BOSWELL: 'I doubt, sir, whether there are many happy people here.' JOHNSON: 'Yes, sir, there are many happy people here. There are many people here who are watching hundreds, and who think hundreds are watching them.'

Happening to meet Sir Adam Ferguson, I presented him to Dr. Johnson. Sir Adam expressed some apprehension that the Pantheon would encourage luxury. 'Sir (said Johnson), I am a great friend to public amusements; for they keep people from vice. You now (addressing himself to me) would have been with a wench, had you not been here.—O! I forgot you were married.'

Sir Adam suggested that luxury corrupts a people, and destroys the spirit of liberty. JOHNSON: 'Sir, that is all visionary. I would not give half a guinea to live under one form of government rather than another. It is of no moment to the happiness of an individual. Sir, the danger of the abuse of power is nothing to a private man. What Frenchman is prevented from passing his life as he pleases?' SIR ADAM: 'But, sir, in the British constitution it is surely of importance to keep up a spirit in the people, so as to preserve a balance against the crown.' JOHNSON: 'Sir, I perceive you are a vile Whig.—Why all this childish jealousy of the power of the crown? The crown has not power enough. When I say that all governments are alike, I consider that in no government power can be abused long. Mankind will not bear it. If a sovereign oppresses his people to a great degree, they will rise and cut off his head. There is a remedy in human nature against tyranny, that will keep us safe under every form of government. Had not the people of France thought themselves honoured in sharing in the brilliant actions of Louis xiv. they would not have endured him; and we may say the same of the King of Prussia's people.' Sir Adam introduced the ancient Greeks and Romans. JOHNSON: 'Sir, the mass of both of them were barbarians. The mass of every people must be barbarous where there is no printing, and consequently knowledge is not generally diffused. Knowledge is diffused among our people by the newspapers.' Sir Adam mentioned the orators, poets, and artists of Greece. JOHNSON: 'Sir, I am talking of the mass of the people. We see even what the boasted Athenians were. The little effect

which Demosthenes' orations had upon them shows that they were barbarians.'

Sir Adam was unlucky in his topics ; for he suggested a doubt of the propriety of bishops having seats in the House of Lords. JOHNSON : 'How so, sir? Who is more proper for having the dignity of a peer, than a bishop, provided a bishop be what he ought to be ; and if improper bishops be made, that is not the fault of the bishops, but of those who make them.'

On Sunday, April 5, after attending divine service at St. Paul's church, I found him alone. Of a school-master of his acquaintance, a native of Scotland, he said : 'He has a great deal of good about him ; but he is also very defective in some respects. His inner part is good, but his outer part is mighty awkward. You in Scotland do not attain that nice critical skill in languages, which we get in our schools in England. I would not put a boy to him, whom I intended for a man of learning. But for the sons of citizens, who are to learn a little, get good morals, and then go to trade, he may do very well.'

I mentioned a cause in which I had appeared as counsel at the bar of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, where a *Probationer* (as one licensed to preach, but not yet ordained, is called) was opposed in his application to be inducted, because it was alleged that he had been guilty of fornication five years before. JOHNSON : 'Why, sir, if he has repented, it is not a sufficient objection. A man who is good enough to go to heaven is good enough to be a clergyman.' This was a humane and liberal sentiment. But the character of a clergyman is more sacred than that of an ordinary Christian. As he is

to instruct with authority, he should be regarded with reverence as one upon whom divine truth has had the effect to set him above such transgressions, as men, less exalted by spiritual habits and yet upon the whole not to be excluded from heaven, have been betrayed into by the predominance of passion. That clergymen may be considered as sinners in general, as all men are, cannot be denied; but this reflection will not counteract their good precepts so much, as the absolute knowledge of their having been guilty of certain specific immoral acts. I told him, that by the rules of the Church of Scotland, in their 'Book of Discipline,' if a *scandal*, as it is called, is not prosecuted for five years, it cannot afterwards be proceeded upon, 'unless it be of a *heinous nature*, or again become flagrant'; and that hence a question arose, whether fornication was a sin of a heinous nature; and that I had maintained, that it did not deserve that epithet, inasmuch as it was not one of those sins which argue very great depravity of heart: in short, was not, in the general acceptance of mankind, a heinous sin. JOHNSON: 'No, sir, it is not a heinous sin. A heinous sin is that for which a man is punished with death or banishment.' BOSWELL: 'But, sir, after I had argued that it was not a heinous sin, an old clergyman rose up, and repeating the text of Scripture denouncing judgment against whoremongers, asked whether, considering this, there could be any doubt of fornication being a heinous sin.' JOHNSON: 'Why, sir, observe the word *whoremonger*. Every sin, if persisted in, will become heinous. Whoremonger is a dealer in whores, as ironmonger is a dealer in iron. But as you don't call a man an ironmouger for buying and selling a

penknife ; so you don't call a man a whoremonger for getting one wench with child.'¹

I spoke of the inequality of the livings of the clergy in England, and the scanty provisions of some of the curates. JOHNSON : ' Why yes, sir ; but it cannot be helped. You must consider that the revenues of the clergy are not at the disposal of the State like the pay of the army. Different men have founded different churches ; and some are better endowed, some worse. The State cannot interfere and make an equal division of what has been particularly appropriated. Now when a clergyman has but a small living, or even two small livings, he can afford very little to the curate.'

He said, he went more frequently to church when there were prayers only, than when there was also a sermon, as the people required more an example for the one than the other ; it being much easier for them to hear a sermon than to fix their minds on prayer.

On Monday, April 6, I dined with him at Sir Alexander Macdonald's, where was a young officer in the regimentals of the Scots Royal, who talked with a vivacity, fluency, and precision so uncommon, that he attracted particular attention. He proved to be the Honourable Thomas Erskine, youngest brother to the Earl of Buchan, who has since risen into such brilliant reputation at the bar in Westminster Hall.

Fielding being mentioned, Johnson exclaimed, ' He was a blockhead ' ; and upon my expressing my astonishment at so strange an assertion, he said, ' What I mean by his being a blockhead is, that he

¹ It must not be presumed that Dr. Johnson meant to give any countenance to licentiousness, though in the character of an advocate he made a just and subtle distinction between occasional and habitual transgression.

was a barren rascal.' BOSWELL: 'Will you not allow, sir, that he draws very natural pictures of human life?' JOHNSON: 'Why, sir, it is of very low life. Richardson used to say, that had he not known who Fielding was, he should have believed he was an ostler. Sir, there is more knowledge of the heart in one letter of Richardson's than in all *Tom Jones*.¹ I, indeed, never read *Joseph Andrews*.' ERSKINE: 'Surely, sir, Richardson is very tedious.' JOHNSON: 'Why, sir, if you were to read Richardson for the story, your impatience would be so much fretted that you would hang yourself. But you must read him for the sentiment, and consider the story as only giving occasion to the sentiment.' I have already given my opinion of Fielding; but I cannot refrain from repeating here my wonder at Johnson's excessive and unaccountable depreciation of one of the best writers that England has produced. *Tom Jones* has stood the test of public opinion with such success as to have established its great merit, both for the story, the sentiments, and the manners, and also the varieties of diction, so as to leave no doubt of its having an animated truth of execution throughout.

A book of travels, lately published under the title of *Coriat Junior*, and written by Mr. Paterson,² was mentioned. Johnson said, this book was in imitation of Sterne,³ and not of Coriat, whose name Paterson

¹ [Johnson's severity against Fielding did not arise from any viciousness in his style, but from his loose life, and the profligacy of almost all his male characters. Who would venture to read one of his novels aloud to modest women? His novels are *male* amusements, and very amusing they certainly are. Fielding's conversation was coarse, and so tinged with the rank weeds of *the Garden*, that it would now be thought only fit for a brothel.—B.]

² Mr. Samuel Paterson, eminent for his knowledge of books.

³ Mr. Paterson, in a pamphlet, produced some evidence to show that his work was written before Sterne's *Sentimental Journey* appeared.

had chosen as a whimsical one. 'Tom Coriat (said he) was a humorist about the court of James the First. He had a mixture of learning, of wit, and of buffoonery. He first travelled through Europe and published his travels. He afterwards travelled on foot through Asia, and had made many remarks; but he died at Mandoa, and his remarks were lost.'

We talked of gaming, and animadverted on it with severity. JOHNSON: 'Nay, gentlemen, let us not aggravate the matter. It is not roguery to play with a man who is ignorant of the game while you are master of it, and so win his money; for he thinks he can play better than you, as you think you can play better than he; and the superior skill carries it. ERSKINE: 'He is a fool, but you are not a rogue.' JOHNSON: 'That's much about the truth, sir. It must be considered, that a man who only does what every one of the society to which he belongs would do, is not a dishonest man. In the republic of Sparta, it was agreed that stealing was not dishonourable if not discovered. I do not commend a society where there is an agreement that what would not otherwise be fair shall be fair; but I maintain, that an individual of any society, who practises what is allowed, is not a dishonest man.' BOSWELL: 'So then, sir, you do not think ill of a man who wins perhaps forty thousand pounds in a winter?' JOHNSON: 'Sir, I do not call a gamester a dishonest man; but I call him an unsocial man, an unprofitable man. Gaming is a mode of transferring property without producing any intermediate good. Trade gives employment to numbers, and so produces intermediate good.'

Mr. Erskine told us that when he was in the island

of Minorca, he not only read prayers, but preached two sermons to the regiment. He seemed to object to the passage in Scripture, where we are told that the angel of the Lord smote in one night forty thousand Assyrians.¹ ‘Sir (said Johnson), you should recollect that there was a supernatural interposition; they were destroyed by pestilence. You are not to suppose that the angel of the Lord went about and stabbed each of them with a dagger, or knocked them on the head, man by man.’

After Mr. Erskine was gone, a discussion took place whether the present Earl of Buchan, when Lord Cardross, did right to refuse to go secretary of the Embassy to Spain, when Sir James Gray, a man of inferior rank, went ambassador. Dr. Johnson said that perhaps in point of interest he did wrong; but in point of dignity he did well. Sir Alexander insisted that he was wrong; and said that Mr. Pitt intended it as an advantageous thing for him. ‘Why, sir (said Johnson), Mr. Pitt might think it an advantageous thing for him to make him a vintner, and get him all the Portugal trade; but he would have demeaned himself strangely had he accepted of such a situation. Sir, had he gone secretary while his inferior was ambassador, he would have been a traitor to his rank and family.’

I talked of the little attachment which subsisted between near relations in London. ‘Sir (said Johnson), in a country so commercial as ours, where every man can do for himself, there is not so much occasion for that attachment. No man is thought the worse of

¹ [One hundred and eighty-five thousand. See Isaiah xxxvii. 36, and 2 Kings xix. 35.—M.]

here, whose brother was hanged. In uncommercial countries, many of the branches of a family must depend on the stock ; so, in order to make the head of the family take care of them, they are represented as connected with his reputation, that, self-love being interested, he may exert himself to promote their interest. You have first large circles, or clans ; as commerce increases, the connection is confined to families ; by degrees, that too goes off, as having become unnecessary, and there being few opportunities of intercourse. One brother is a merchant in the city, and another is an officer in the Guards ; how little intercourse can these two have !'

I argued warmly for the old feudal system. Sir Alexander opposed it, and talked of the pleasure of seeing all men free and independent. JOHNSON : 'I agree with Mr. Boswell, that there must be high satisfaction in being a feudal lord ; but we are to consider that we ought not to wish to have a number of men unhappy for the satisfaction of one.' I maintained that numbers, namely, the vassals or followers, were not unhappy, for that there was a reciprocal satisfaction between the lord and them, he being kind in his authority over them, they being respectful and faithful to him.

On Thursday, April 9, I called on him to beg he would go and dine with me at the Mitre tavern. He had resolved not to dine at all this day, I know not for what reason ; and I was so unwilling to be deprived of his company, that I was content to submit to suffer a want, which was at first somewhat painful, but he soon made me forget it ; and a man is always pleased with himself when he finds his intellectual inclinations predominate.

He observed, that to reason philosophically on the nature of prayer, was very unprofitable.

Talking of ghosts, he said he knew one friend who was an honest man and a sensible man, who told him he had seen a ghost; old Mr. Edward Cave, the printer at St. John's Gate. He said Mr. Cave did not like to talk of it, and seemed to be in great horror whenever it was mentioned. BOSWELL: 'Pray, sir, what did he say was the appearance?' JOHNSON: 'Why, sir, something of a shadowy being.'

I mentioned witches, and asked him what they properly meant. JOHNSON: 'Why, sir, they properly mean those who make use of the aid of evil spirits.' BOSWELL: 'There is no doubt, sir, a general report and belief of their having existed.' JOHNSON: 'You have not only the general report and belief, but you have many voluntary solemn confessions.' He did not affirm anything positively upon a subject which it is the fashion of the times to laugh at as a matter of absurd credulity. He only seemed willing, as a candid inquirer after truth, however strange and inexplicable, to show that he understood what might be urged for it.¹

On Friday, April 10, I dined with him at General Oglethorpe's, where we found Dr. Goldsmith.

Armorial bearings having been mentioned, Johnson said they were as ancient as the siege of Thebes, which he proved by a passage in one of the tragedies of Euripides.²

¹ See this curious question treated by him with most acute ability, *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides*, 3rd edit., p. 33.

² [The passage to which Johnson alluded is to be found (as I conjecture) in the *Phænissæ*, 1120:

Καὶ πρῶτα μὲν προσῆγε, κ.τ.λ.
 'Ο τῆς κυναγοῦ Παρθενοναίου ἔκγονος,
 ΕΠΙΣΗΜ' ἔχων ΟΪΚΕΙΟΝ ἐν μέσῳ σάκει.

—J. BOSWELL, Junior.]

I started the question whether duelling was consistent with moral duty. The brave old General fired at this, and said, with a lofty air, 'Undoubtedly a man has a right to defend his honour.' GOLDSMITH (turning to me): 'I ask you, first, sir, what would you do if you were affronted?' I answered, I should think it necessary to fight. 'Why, then (replied Goldsmith), that solves the question.' JOHNSON: 'No, sir, it does not solve the question. It does not follow that what a man would do is therefore right.' I said I wished to have it settled whether duelling was contrary to the laws of Christianity. Johnson immediately entered on the subject, and treated it in a masterly manner; and so far as I have been able to recollect, his thoughts were these: 'Sir, as men become in a high degree refined, various causes of offence arise, which are considered to be of such importance that life must be staked to atone for them, though in reality they are not so. A body that has received a very fine polish may be easily hurt. Before men arrive at this artificial refinement, if one tells his neighbour—he lies, his neighbour tells him—he lies; if one gives his neighbour a blow, his neighbour gives him a blow; but in a state of highly polished society, an affront is held to be a serious injury. It must, therefore, be resented, or rather a duel must be fought upon it; as men have agreed to banish from their society one who puts up with an affront without fighting a duel. Now, sir, it is never unlawful to fight in self-defence. He, then, who fights a duel, does not fight from passion against his antagonist, but out of self-defence; to avert the stigma of the world, and to prevent himself from being driven out of society. I could wish there was not

that superfluity of refinement ; but while such notions prevail, no doubt a man may lawfully fight a duel.'

Let it be remembered that this justification is applicable only to the person who *receives* an affront. All mankind must condemn the aggressor.

The General told us that when he was a very young man, I think only fifteen, serving under Prince Eugene of Savoy, he was sitting in a company at table with a Prince of Wirtemberg. The Prince took up a glass of wine, and, by a fillip, made some of it fly in Oglethorpe's face. Here was a nice dilemma. To have challenged him instantly, might have fixed a quarrelsome character upon the young soldier : to have taken no notice of it might have been considered as cowardice. Oglethorpe, therefore, keeping his eye upon the Prince, and smiling all the time, as if he took what his Highness had done in jest, said, '*Mon Prince*——' (I forget the French words he used, the purport, however, was), 'That's a good joke ; but we do it much better in England'; and threw a whole glass of wine in the Prince's face. An old General who sat by, said, '*Il a bien fait, mon Prince, vous l'avez commencé.*' And thus all ended in good humour.

Dr. Johnson said, 'Pray, General, give us an account of the siege of Belgrade.' Upon which the General, pouring a little wine upon the table, described everything with a wet finger : 'Here we were, here were the Turks,' etc. etc. Johnson listened with the closest attention.

A question was started, how far people who disagreed in a capital point can live in friendship together. Johnson said they might. Goldsmith said they could not, as they had not the *idem velle atque idem nolle*—

the same likings and the same aversions. JOHNSON: 'Why, sir, you must shun the subject as to which you disagree. For instance, I can live very well with Burke: I love his knowledge, his genius, his diffusion, and affluence of conversation; but I would not talk to him of the Rockingham party.' GOLDSMITH: 'But, sir, when people live together who have something as to which they disagree, and which they want to shun, they will be in the situation mentioned in the story of Bluebeard, "You may look into all the chambers but one." But we should have the greatest inclination to look into that chamber, to talk of that subject.' JOHNSON (with a loud voice): 'Sir, I am not saying that *you* could live in friendship with a man from whom you differ as to some point: I am only saying that *I* could do it. You put me in mind of Sappho in Ovid.'¹

Goldsmith told us that he was now busy in writing a Natural History; and, that he might have full leisure for it, he had taken lodgings, at a farmer's house, near to the six mile-stone, on the Edgeware Road, and had carried down his books in two returned post-chaises. He said he believed the farmer's family thought him an odd character, similar to that in which the *Spectator* appeared to his landlady and her children: he was *The Gentleman*. Mr. Mickle, the translator of the *Lusiad*, and I, went to visit him at this

¹ [Mr. Boswell's note here being rather short, as taken at the time (with a view perhaps to future revision), Johnson's remark is obscure, and requires to be a little opened. What he said probably was, 'You seem to think that two friends, to live well together, must be in a perfect harmony with each other: that each should be to the other what Sappho boasts she was to her lover, and uniformly agree in every particular: but this is by no means necessary,' etc. The words of Sappho alluded to are, '*omnique à parte placebam*.'—Ovid. *Epist. Sapp. ad Phaonem*, i. 45.—M.]

place a few days afterwards. He was not at home ; but having a curiosity to see his apartment we went in, and found curious scraps of descriptions of animals scrawled upon the wall with a black-lead pencil.

The subject of ghosts being introduced, Johnson repeated what he had told me of a friend of his, an honest man, and a man of sense, having asserted to him that he had seen an apparition. Goldsmith told us he was assured by his brother, the Reverend Mr. Goldsmith, that he also had seen one. General Oglethorpe told us, that Prendergast, an officer in the Duke of Marlborough's army, had mentioned to many of his friends that he should die on a particular day : that upon that day a battle took place with the French ; that after it was over, and Prendergast was still alive, his brother officers, while they were yet in the field, jestingly asked him where was his prophecy now. Prendergast gravely answered, 'I shall die, notwithstanding what you see.' Soon afterwards there came a shot from a French battery, to which the orders for a cessation of arms had not yet reached, and he was killed upon the spot. Colonel Cecil, who took possession of his effects, found in his pocket-book the following solemn entry :

[Here the date.] 'Dreamt—or————¹ Sir John Friend meets me.' [Here the very day on which he was killed was mentioned.]

Prendergast had been connected with Sir John Friend, who was executed for high treason. General Ogle-

¹ Here was a blank, which may be filled up thus, '*was told by an apparition*,' the writer being probably uncertain whether he was asleep or awake, when his mind was impressed with the solemn presentiment with which the fact afterwards happened so wonderfully to correspond.

thorpe said he was with Colonel Cecil when Pope came and inquired into the truth of this story, which made a great noise at the time, and was then confirmed by the Colonel.

On Saturday, April 11, he appointed me to come to him in the evening, when he should be at leisure to give me some assistance for the defence of Hastie, the schoolmaster of Campbeltown, for whom I was to appear in the House of Lords. When I came I found him unwilling to exert himself. I pressed him to write down his thoughts upon the subject. He said, 'There's no occasion for my writing; I'll talk to you.' He was, however, at last prevailed on to dictate to me, while I wrote as follows :

'The charge is, that he has used immoderate and cruel correction. Correction, in itself, is not cruel; children, being not reasonable, can be governed only by fear. To impress this fear is therefore one of the first duties of those who have the care of children. It is the duty of a parent; and has never been thought inconsistent with parental tenderness. It is the duty of a master, who is in his highest exaltation when he is *loco parentis*. Yet, as good things become evil by excess, correction, by being immoderate, may become cruel. But when is correction immoderate? When it is more frequent or more severe than is required *ad monendum et docendum*, for reformation and instruction. No severity is cruel which obstinacy makes necessary: for the greatest cruelty would be to desist, and leave the scholar too careless for instruction, and too much hardened for reproof. Locke, in his treatise of Education, mentions a mother, with applause, who whipped an infant eight times before she had subdued it; for had she stopped at the seventh act of correction, her daughter, says he, would have been ruined. The degrees of obstinacy in young minds are very different: as different must be the degrees of persevering severity. A stubborn scholar must be corrected till he is subdued. The discipline of a school is

military. There must be either unbounded licence or absolute authority. The master, who punishes, not only consults the future happiness of him who is the immediate subject of correction, but he propagates obedience through the whole school : and establishes regularity by exemplary justice. The victorious obstinacy of a single boy would make his future endeavours of reformation or instruction totally ineffectual. Obstinacy, therefore, must never be victorious. Yet it is well known that there sometimes occurs a sullen and hardy resolution, that laughs at all common punishment, and bids defiance to all common degrees of pain. Correction must be proportioned to occasions. The flexible will be reformed by gentle discipline, and the refractory must be subdued by harsher methods. The degrees of scholastic, as of military punishment, no stated rules can ascertain. It must be enforced till it overpowers temptation ; till stubbornness becomes flexible, and perverseness regular. Custom and reason have, indeed, set some bounds to scholastic penalties. The schoolmaster inflicts no capital punishments ; nor enforces his edicts by either death or mutilation. The civil law has wisely determined that a master who strikes at a scholar's eye shall be considered as criminal. But punishments, however severe, that produce no lasting evil may be just and reasonable, because they may be necessary. Such have been the punishments used by the respondent. No scholar has gone from him either blind or lame, or with any of his limbs or powers injured or impaired. They were irregular, and he punished them : they were obstinate, and he enforced his punishment. But however provoked, he never exceeded the limits of moderation, for he inflicted nothing beyond present pain : and how much of that was required no man is so little able to determine as those who have determined against him—the parents of the offenders. It has been said that he used unprecedented and improper instruments of correction. Of this accusation the meaning is not very easy to be found. No instrument of correction is more proper than another, but as it is better adapted to produce present pain without lasting mischief. Whatever were his instruments, no lasting mischief has ensued ; and therefore, however unusual, in hands so cautious they were proper. It has been objected that the

respondent admits the charge of cruelty by producing no evidence to confute it. Let it be considered that his scholars are either dispersed at large in the world, or continue to inhabit the place in which they were bred. Those who are dispersed cannot be found; those who remain are the sons of his prosecutors, and are not likely to support a man to whom their fathers are enemies. If it be supposed that the enmity of their fathers proves the justness of the charge, it must be considered how often experience shows us that men who are angry on one ground will accuse on another; with how little kindness, in a town of low trade, a man who lives by learning is regarded; and how implicitly, where the inhabitants are not very rich, a rich man is hearkened to and followed. In a place like Campbeltown it is easy for one of the principal inhabitants to make a party. It is easy for that party to heat themselves with imaginary grievances. It is easy for them to oppress a man poorer than themselves; and natural to assert the dignity of riches, by persisting in oppression. The argument which attempts to prove the impropriety of restoring him to the school, by alleging that he has lost the confidence of the people, is not the subject of juridical consideration; for he is to suffer, if he must suffer, not for their judgment, but for his own actions. It may be convenient for them to have another master; but it is a convenience of their own making. It would be likewise convenient for him to find another school; but this convenience he cannot obtain. The question is not what is now convenient, but what is generally right. If the people of Campbeltown be distressed by the restoration of the respondent, they are distressed only by their own fault; by turbulent passions and unreasonable desires; by tyranny, which law has defeated, and by malice, which virtue has surmounted.'

'This, sir (said he), you are to turn in your mind, and make the best use of it you can in your speech.'

Of our friend Goldsmith he said, 'Sir, he is so much afraid of being unnoticed that he often talks merely lest you should forget that he is in the company.'

BOSWELL: 'Yes, he stands forward.' JOHNSON. 'True,

sir ; but if a man is to stand forward he should wish to do it, not in an awkward posture, not in rags, not so as that he shall only be exposed to ridicule.’

BOSWELL : ‘ For my part, I like very well to hear honest Goldsmith talk away carelessly.’ JOHNSON : ‘ Why yes, sir ; but he should not like to hear himself.’

On Tuesday, April 14, the decree of the Court of Session in the schoolmaster’s cause was reversed in the House of Lords, after a very eloquent speech by Lord Mansfield, who showed himself an adept in school discipline, but I thought was too rigorous towards my client. On the evening of the next day I supped with Dr. Johnson, at the Crown and Anchor tavern in the Strand, in company with Mr. Langton and his brother-in-law, Lord Binning. I repeated a sentence of Lord Mansfield’s speech, of which, by the aid of Mr. Longlands, the solicitor on the other side, who obligingly allowed me to compare his note with my own, I have a full copy, ‘ My Lords, severity is not the way to govern either boys or men.’ ‘ Nay (said Johnson), it is the way to *govern* them. I know not whether it be the way to *mend* them.’

I talked of the recent expulsion of six students from the University of Oxford, who were Methodists, and would not desist from publicly praying and exhorting. JOHNSON : ‘ Sir, that expulsion was extremely just and proper. What have they to do at a University, who are not willing to be taught, but will presume to teach ? Where is religion to be learned but at a University ? Sir, they were examined, and found to be mighty ignorant fellows.’ BOSWELL : ‘ But, was it not hard, sir, to expel them, for I am told they were good

beings?’ JOHNSON: ‘I believe they might be good beings; but they were not fit to be in the University of Oxford. A cow is a very good animal in the field; but we turn her out of a garden.’ Lord Elibank used to repeat this as an illustration uncommonly happy.

Desirous of calling Johnson forth to talk and exercise his wit, though I should myself be the object of it, I resolutely ventured to undertake the defence of convivial indulgence in wine, though he was not to-night in the most genial humour. After urging the common plausible topics, I at last had recourse to the maxim, *in vino veritas*, a man who is well warmed with wine will speak truth. JOHNSON: ‘Why, sir, that may be an argument for drinking, if you suppose men in general to be liars. But, sir, I would not keep company with a fellow who lies as long as he is sober, and whom you must make drunk before you can get a word of truth out of him.’¹

Mr. Langton told us he was about to establish a school upon his estate, but it had been suggested to him that it might have a tendency to make the people less industrious. JOHNSON: ‘No, sir. While learning to read and write is a distinction, the few who have that distinction may be the less inclined to work; but when everybody learns to read and write it is no longer a distinction. A man who has a laced waistcoat is too fine a man to work; but if everybody had laced waistcoats we should have people working in laced waistcoats. There are no people whatever more

¹ Mrs. Piozzi, in her *Anecdotes*, has given an erroneous account of this incident, as of many others. She pretends to relate it from recollection, as if she herself had been present: when the fact is that it was communicated to her by me. She has represented it as a personality, and the true point has escaped her.

industrious, none who work more, than our manufacturers ; yet they have all learned to read and write. Sir, you must not neglect doing a thing immediately good from fear of remote evil ;—from fear of its being abused. A man who has candles may sit up too late, which he would not do if he had not candles ; but nobody will deny that the art of making candles, by which light is continued to us beyond the time that the sun gives us light, is a valuable art, and ought to be preserved.’ BOSWELL : ‘ But, sir, would it not be better to follow nature ; and go to bed and rise just as nature gives us light or withholds it ? ’ JOHNSON : ‘ No, sir ; for then we should have no kind of equality in the partition of our time between sleeping and waking. It would be very different in different seasons and in different places. In some of the northern parts of Scotland how little light is there in the depth of winter ! ’

We talked of Tacitus, and I hazarded an opinion, that with all his merit of penetration, shrewdness of judgment, and terseness of expression, he was too compact, too much broken into hints, as it were, and therefore too difficult to be understood. To my great satisfaction, Dr. Johnson sanctioned this opinion. ‘ Tacitus, sir, seems to me rather to have made notes for an historical work, than to have written a history. ’ ¹

At this time, it appears from his *Prayers and Meditations*, that he had been more than commonly diligent in religious duties, particularly in reading the Holy

¹ It is remarkable that Lord Monboddo, whom, on account of his resembling Dr. Johnson in some particulars, Foote called an Elzevir edition of him, has, by coincidence, made the very same remark. —*Origin and Progress of Language*, vol. iii. 2nd edit., p. 219.

Scriptures. It was Passion Week, that solemn season which the Christian world has appropriated to the commemoration of the mysteries of our redemption, and during which, whatever embers of religion are in our breasts, will be kindled into pious warmth.

I paid him short visits both on Friday and Saturday, and seeing his large folio Greek Testament before him, beheld him with a reverential awe, and would not intrude upon his time. While he was thus employed to such good purpose, and while his friends in their intercourse with him constantly found a vigorous intellect and a lively imagination, it is melancholy to read in his private register, 'My mind is unsettled and my memory confused. I have of late turned my thoughts with a very useless earnestness upon past incidents. I have yet got no command over my thoughts; and unpleasing incident is almost certain to hinder my rest.'¹ What philosophic heroism was it in him to appear with such manly fortitude to the world, while he was inwardly so distressed! We may surely believe that the mysterious principle of being 'made perfect through suffering,' was to be strongly exemplified in him.

On Sunday, April 19, being Easter Day, General Paoli and I paid him a visit before dinner. We talked of the notion that blind persons can distinguish colours by the touch. Johnson said that Professor Sanderson mentions his having attempted to do it, but that he found he was aiming at an impossibility; that to be sure a difference in the surface makes the difference of colours; but that difference is so fine that it is not

¹ *Prayers and Meditations*, p. 111.

sensible to the touch. The General mentioned jugglers and fraudulent gamesters, who could know cards by the touch. Dr. Johnson said, 'The cards used by such persons must be less polished than ours commonly are.'

We talked of sounds. The General said there was no beauty in a simple sound, but only in an harmonious composition of sounds. I presumed to differ from this opinion, and mentioned the soft and sweet sound of a fine woman's voice. JOHNSON: 'No, sir, if a serpent or a toad uttered it you would think it ugly.' BOSWELL: 'So you would think, sir, were a beautiful tune to be uttered by one of those animals.' JOHNSON: 'No, sir, it would be admired. We have seen fine fiddlers whom we liked as little as toads' (laughing).

Talking on the subject of taste in the arts he said, that difference of taste was in truth difference of skill. BOSWELL: 'But, sir, is there not a quality called taste, which consists merely in perception or in liking? For instance, we find people differ much as to what is the best style of English composition. Some think Swift's the best; others prefer a fuller and grander way of writing.' JOHNSON: 'Sir, you must first define what you mean by style before you can judge who has a good taste in style and who has a bad. The two classes of persons whom you have mentioned don't differ as to good and bad. They both agree that Swift has a good neat style; but one loves a neat style, another loves a style of more splendour. In like manner one loves a plain coat, another loves a laced coat; but neither will deny that each is good in its kind.'

While I remained in London this spring I was with him at several other times, both by himself and in company. I dined with him one day at the Crown and Anchor tavern in the Strand, with Lord Elibank, Mr. Langton, and Dr. Vansittart of Oxford. Without specifying each particular day I have preserved the following memorable things.

I regretted the reflection in his Preface to Shakespeare against Garrick, to whom we cannot but apply the following passage: 'I collated such copies as I could procure, and wished for more, but have not found the collectors of these rarities very communicative.' I told him that Garrick had complained to me of it, and had vindicated himself by assuring me that Johnson was made welcome to the full use of his collection, and that he left the key of it with a servant, with orders to have a fire and every convenience for him. I found Johnson's notion was that Garrick wanted to be courted for them, and that, on the contrary, Garrick should have courted him, and sent him the plays of his own accord. But, indeed, considering the slovenly and careless manner in which books were treated by Johnson, it could not be expected that scarce and valuable editions should have been lent to him.

A gentleman having to some of the usual arguments for drinking added this: 'You know, sir, drinking drives away care, and makes us forget whatever is disagreeable. Would not you allow a man to drink for that reason?' JOHNSON: 'Yes, sir, if he sat next *you*.'

I expressed a liking for Mr. Francis Osborne's works, and asked him what he thought of that writer.

He answered, 'A conceited fellow. Were a man to write so now the boys would throw stones at him.' He, however, did not alter my opinion of a favourite author, to whom I was first directed by his being quoted in *The Spectator*, and in whom I have found much shrewd and lively sense, expressed indeed in a style somewhat quaint, which, however, I do not dislike. His book has an air of originality. We figure to ourselves an ancient gentleman talking to us.

When one of his friends endeavoured to maintain that a country gentleman might contrive to pass his life very agreeably, 'Sir (said he), you cannot give me an instance of any man who is permitted to lay out his own time, contriving not to have tedious hours.' This observation, however, is equally applicable to gentlemen who live in cities, and are of no profession.

He said, 'There is no permanent national character ; it varies according to circumstances. Alexander the Great swept India : now the Turks sweep Greece.'

A learned gentleman who in the course of conversation wished to inform us of this simple fact, that the Counsel upon the Circuit at Shrewsbury were much bitten by fleas, took, I suppose, seven or eight minutes in relating it circumstantially. He in a plenitude of phrase told us, that large bales of woollen cloth were lodged in the town hall ; that by reason of this, fleas nestled there in prodigious numbers ; that the lodgings of the Counsel were near the town hall ; and that those little animals moved from place to place with wonderful agility. Johnson sat in great impatience till the gentleman had finished his tedious narrative, and then burst out (playfully, however), 'It is a pity,

sir, that you have not seen a lion ; for a flea has taken you such a time, that a lion must have served you a twelvemonth.’¹

He would not allow Scotland to derive any credit from Lord Mansfield, for he was educated in England. ‘Much (said he) may be made of a Scotsman, if he is *caught* young.’

Talking of a modern historian and a modern moralist, he said, ‘There is more thought in the moralist than in the historian. There is but a shallow stream of thought in history.’ BOSWELL: ‘But surely, sir, an historian has reflection.’ JOHNSON: ‘Why, yes, sir; and so has a cat when she catches a mouse for her kitten. But she cannot write like — —; neither can — —.’

He said, ‘I am very unwilling to read the manuscripts of authors, and give them my opinion. If the authors who apply to me have money, I bid them boldly print without a name ; if they have written in order to get money, I tell them to go to the booksellers and make the best bargain they can.’ BOSWELL: ‘But, sir, if a bookseller should bring you a manuscript to look at?’ JOHNSON: ‘Why, sir, I would desire the bookseller to take it away.’

I mentioned a friend of mine who had resided long in Spain, and was unwilling to return to Britain. JOHNSON: ‘Sir, he is attached to some woman.’ BOSWELL: ‘I rather believe, sir, it is the fine climate which keeps him there.’ JOHNSON: ‘Nay, sir, how can you talk so? What is *climate* to happiness? Place me in the heart of Asia, should I not be exiled?

¹ Mrs. Piozzi, to whom I told this anecdote, has related it as if the gentleman had given ‘the *natural history* of the *mouse*.’—*Anecdotes*.

What proportion does climate bear to the complex system of human life? You may advise me to go to live at Bologna to eat sausages. The sausages there are the best in the world; they lose much by being carried.'

On Saturday, May 9, Mr. Dempster and I had agreed to dine by ourselves at the British Coffee-house. Johnson, on whom I happened to call in the morning, said he would join us, which he did, and we spent a very agreeable day, though I recollect but little of what passed.

He said, 'Walpole was a minister given by the King to the people: Pitt was a minister given by the people to the King—as an adjunct.'

'The misfortune of Goldsmith in conversation is this: he goes on without knowing how he is to get off. His genius is great, but his knowledge is small. As they say of a generous man, it is a pity he is not rich, we may say of Goldsmith, it is a pity he is not knowing. He would not keep his knowledge to himself.'

Before leaving London this year, I consulted him upon a question purely of Scots law. It was held of old, and continued for a long period, to be an established principle in that law, that whoever intermeddled with the effects of a person deceased, without the interposition of legal authority to guard against embezzlement, should be subjected to pay all the debts of the deceased, as having been guilty of what was technically called *vicious intromission*. The Court of Session had gradually relaxed the strictness of this principle, where the interference proved had been inconsiderable. In a case¹ which came before that Court the preceding

¹ Wilson against Smith and Armour.

winter, I had laboured to persuade the Judge to return to the ancient law. It was my own sincere opinion that they ought to adhere to it; but I had exhausted all my powers of reasoning in vain. Johnson thought as I did; and in order to assist me in my application to the Court for a revision and alteration of the judgment, he dictated to me the following argument:

‘This, we are told, is a law which has its force only from the long practice of the Court; and may, therefore, be suspended or modified as the Court shall think proper.

‘Concerning the power of the Court to make or to suspend a law, we have no intention to inquire. It is sufficient for our purpose that every just law is dictated by reason; and that the practice of every legal Court is regulated by equity. It is the quality of reason to be invariable and constant; and of equity to give to one man what, in the same case, is given to another. The advantage which humanity derives from law is this: that the law gives every man a rule of action, and prescribes a mode of conduct which shall entitle him to the support and protection of society. That the law may be a rule of action, it is necessary that it be known; it is necessary that it be permanent and stable. The law is the measure of civil right; but if the measure be changeable, the extent of the thing measured never can be settled.

‘To permit a law to be modified at discretion is to leave the community without law. It is to withdraw the direction of that public wisdom by which the deficiencies of private understanding are to be supplied. It is to suffer the rash and ignorant to act at discretion, and then to depend for the legality of that action on the sentence of the judge. He that is thus governed, lives not by law but by opinion: not by a certain rule to which he can apply his intention before he acts, but by an uncertain and variable opinion, which he can know but after he has committed the act on which that opinion shall be passed. He lives by a law (if a law it be) which he can never know before he has offended it. To this case may be justly applied that important principle, *misera est servitus ubi jus est aut incognitum aut vagum*. If intromission be not criminal

till it exceeds a certain point, and that point be unsettled, and consequently different in different minds, the right of intromission, and the right of the creditor arising from it, are all *jura vaga*, and, by consequence, are *jura incognita*; and the result can be no other than a *misera servitus*, an uncertainty concerning the event of action, a servile dependence on private opinion.

‘It may be urged, and with great plausibility, that there may be intromission without fraud; which, however true, will by no means justify an occasional and arbitrary relaxation of the law. The end of law is protection as well as vengeance. Indeed, vengeance is never used but to strengthen protection. That society only is well governed, where life is freed from danger and from suspicion; where possession is so sheltered by salutary prohibitions, that violation is prevented more frequently than punished. Such a prohibition was this while it operated with its original force. The creditor of the deceased was not only without loss, but without fear. He was not to seek a remedy for an injury suffered; for, injury was warded off.

‘As the law has been sometimes administered it lays us open to wounds, because it is imagined to have the power of healing. To punish fraud when it is detected is the proper art of vindictive justice; but to prevent frauds, and make punishment unnecessary, is the great employment of legislative wisdom. To permit intromission, and to punish fraud, is to make law no better than a pitfall. To tread upon the brink is safe; but to come a step farther is destruction. But, surely, it is better to enclose the gulf, and hinder all access, than by encouraging us to advance a little, to entice us afterwards a little farther, and let us perceive our folly only by our destruction.

‘As law supplies the weak with adventitious strength it likewise enlightens the ignorant with extrinsic understanding. Law teaches us to know when we commit injury, and when we suffer it. It fixes certain marks upon actions by which we are admonished to do or to forbear them. *Qui sibi bene temperat in licitis*, says one of the fathers, *nunquam cadet in illicita*. He who never intromits at all will never intromit with fraudulent intentions.

‘The relaxation of the law against vicious intromission has been very favourably represented by a great master of jurisprudence,¹ whose words have been exhibited with unnecessary pomp, and seem to be considered as irresistibly decisive. The great moment of his authority makes it necessary to examine his position. “Some ages ago (says he), before the ferocity of the inhabitants of this part of the island was subdued, the utmost severity of the civil law was necessary to restrain individuals from plundering each other. Thus, the man who intermeddled irregularly with the moveables of a person deceased was subjected to all the debts of the deceased without limitation. This makes a branch of the law of Scotland, known by the name of *vicious intromission*; and so rigidly was this regulation applied in our Courts of Law that the most trifling moveable abstracted *mala fide* subjected the intermeddler to the foregoing consequences, which proved in many instances a most rigorous punishment. But this severity was necessary in order to subdue the undisciplined nature of our people. It is extremely remarkable that in proportion to our improvement in manners, this regulation has been gradually softened, and applied by our sovereign Court with a sparing hand.”

‘I find myself under a necessity of observing that this learned and judicious writer has not accurately distinguished the deficiencies and demands of the different conditions of human life, which, from a degree of savageness and independence, in which all laws are vain, passes or may pass by innumerable gradations to a state of reciprocal benignity, in which laws shall be no longer necessary. Men are first wild and unsociable, living each man to himself, taking from the weak, and losing to the strong. In their first coalitions of society much of this original savageness is retained. Of general happiness, the product of general confidence, there is yet no thought. Men continue to prosecute their own advantages by the nearest way; and the utmost severity of the civil law is necessary to restrain individuals from plundering each other. The restraints then necessary are restraints from plunder, from acts of public violence, and undisguised

¹ Lord Kames in his *Historical Law Tracts*.

oppression. The ferocity of our ancestors, as of all other nations, produced not fraud but rapine. They had not yet learned to cheat, and attempted only to rob. As manners grow more polished, with the knowledge of good, men attain likewise dexterity in evil. Open rapine becomes less frequent, and violence gives way to cunning. Those who before invaded pastures and stormed houses now begin to enrich themselves by unequal contracts and fraudulent intrusions. It is not against the violence of ferocity, but the circumventions of deceit, that this law was framed; and I am afraid the increase of commerce, and the incessant struggle for riches which commerce excites, gives us no prospect of an end speedily to be expected of artifice and fraud. It therefore seems to be no very conclusive reasoning which connects those two propositions: "the nation is become less ferocious, and therefore the laws against fraud and *covin* shall be relaxed."

'Whatever reason may have influenced the judges to a relaxation of the law, it was not that the nation was grown less fierce; and, I am afraid, it cannot be affirmed that it is grown less fraudulent.

'Since this law has been represented as rigorously and unreasonably penal, it seems not improper to consider what are the conditions and qualities that make the justice or propriety of a penal law.

'To make a penal law reasonable and just, two conditions are necessary and two proper: it is necessary that the law should be adequate to its end; that, if it be observed, it shall prevent the evil against which it is directed; it is, secondly, necessary that the end of the law be of such importance as to deserve the security of a penal sanction. The other conditions of a penal law, which, though not absolutely necessary, are to a very high degree fit, are, that to the moral violation of the law there are many temptations, and that of the physical observance there is great facility.

'All these conditions apparently concur to justify the law which we are now considering. Its end is the security of property; and property very often of great value. The method by which it affects the security is efficacious, because it admits, in its original rigour, no gradations of injury; but keeps guilt and innocence apart by a distinct and definite

limitation. He that intromits is criminal; he that intromits not is innocent. Of the two secondary considerations it cannot be denied that both are in our favour. The temptation to intromit is frequent and strong; so strong and so frequent as to require the utmost activity of justice and vigilance of caution to withstand its prevalence; and the method by which a man may entitle himself to legal intromission is so open and so facile, that to neglect it is a proof of fraudulent intention; for why should a man omit to do (but for reasons which he will not confess) that which he can do so easily, and that which he knows to be required by the law? If temptation were rare, a penal law might be deemed unnecessary. If the duty enjoined by the law were of difficult performance, omission, though it could not be justified, might be pitied. But in the present case neither equity nor compassion operate against it. A useful, a necessary, law is broken, not only without a reasonable motive, but with all the inducements to obedience that can be derived from safety and facility.

‘I therefore return to my original position, that a law, to have its effects, must be permanent and stable. It may be said, in the language of the schools, *Lex non recipit majus et minus*,—we may have a law, or we may have no law, but we cannot have half a law. We must either have a rule of action, or be permitted to act by discretion and by chance. Deviations from the law must be uniformly punished, or no man can be certain when he shall be safe.

‘That from the rigour of the original institution this Court has sometimes departed cannot be denied. But, as it is evident that such deviations, as they make law uncertain, make life unsafe, I hope that of departing from it there will now be an end; that the wisdom of our ancestors will be treated with due reverence; and that consistent and steady decisions will furnish the people with a rule of action, and leave fraud and fraudulent intromissions no future hope of impunity or escape.’

With such comprehension of mind and such clearness of penetration did he thus treat a subject altogether new to him, without any other preparation than my having stated to him the arguments which had

been used on each side of the question. His intellectual powers appeared with peculiar lustre when tried against those of a writer of such fame as Lord Kames, and that too in his Lordship's own department.

This masterly argument, after being prefaced and concluded with some sentences of my own, and garnished with the usual formularies, was actually printed and laid before the Lords of Session, but without success. My respected friend Lord Hailes, however, one of that honourable body, had critical sagacity enough to discover a more than ordinary hand in the *Petition*. I told him Dr. Johnson had favoured me with his pen. His Lordship, with wonderful *acumen*, pointed out exactly where his composition began and where it ended. But that I may do impartial justice, and conform to the great rule of Courts, *Suum cuique tribuito*, I must add, that their Lordships in general, though they were pleased to call this 'a well-drawn paper,' preferred the former very inferior petition which I had written; thus confirming the truth of an observation made to me by one of their number in a merry mood: 'My dear sir, give yourself no trouble in the composition of the papers you present to us: for, indeed, it is casting pearls before swine.'

I renewed my solicitations that Dr. Johnson would this year accomplish his long-intended visit to Scotland.

TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

'DEAR SIR,—The regret has not been little with which I have missed a journey so pregnant with pleasing expectations, as that in which I could promise myself not only the gratifica-

tion of curiosity, both rational and fanciful, but the delight of seeing those whom I love and esteem. . . . But such has been the course of things that I could not come; and such has been, I am afraid, the state of my body that it would not well have seconded my inclination. My body, I think, grows better, and I refer my hopes to another year; for I am very sincere in my design to pay the visit and take the ramble. In the meantime, do not omit any opportunity of keeping up a favourable opinion of me in the minds of any of my friends. Beattie's book is, I believe, every day more liked; at least, I like it more as I look more upon it.

'I am glad if you got credit by your cause, and am yet of opinion that our cause was good, and that the determination ought to have been in your favour. Poor Hastie, I think, had but his deserts.

'You promised to get me a little Pindar; you may add to it a little Anacreon.

'The leisure which I cannot enjoy it will be a pleasure to hear that you employ upon the antiquities of the feudal establishment. The whole system of ancient tenures is gradually passing away; and I wish to have the knowledge of it preserved adequate and complete. For such an institution makes a very important part of the history of mankind. Do not forget a design so worthy of a scholar who studies the law of his country, and of a gentleman who may naturally be curious to know the condition of his own ancestors.—I am, dear sir, yours with great affection,

SAM. JOHNSON.

'August 31, 1772.'

TO DR. JOHNSON

'*Edinburgh, Dec. 25, 1772.*

'MY DEAR SIR,—. . . I was much disappointed that you did not come to Scotland last autumn. However, I must own that your letter prevents me from complaining; not only because I am sensible that the state of your health was but too good an excuse, but because you write in a strain which shows that you have agreeable views of the scheme which we have so long proposed.

'I communicated to Beattie what you said of his book in

your last letter to me. He writes to me thus: "You judge very rightly in supposing that Dr. Johnson's favourable opinion of my book must give me great delight. Indeed, it is impossible for me to say how much I am gratified by it; for there is not a man upon earth whose good opinion I would be more ambitious to cultivate. His talents and his virtues I reverence more than any words can express. The extraordinary civilities (the paternal attentions, I should rather say) and the many instructions I have had the honour to receive from him, will to me be a perpetual source of pleasure in the recollection,

*"Dum memor ipse mei, dum spiritus hos reget artus."*¹

"I had still some thoughts, while the summer lasted, of being obliged to go to London on some little business; otherwise I should certainly have troubled him with a letter several months ago, and given some vent to my gratitude and admiration. This I intend to do as soon as I am left a little at leisure. Meantime, if you have occasion to write to him, I beg you will offer him my most respectful compliments, and assure him of the sincerity of my attachment and the warmth of my gratitude." . . .—I am, etc., JAMES BOSWELL.²

In 1773 his only publication was an edition of his folio *Dictionary*, with additions and corrections; nor did he, so far as is known, furnish any productions of his fertile pen to any of his numerous friends or dependants, except the Preface² to his old amanuensis Macbean's *Dictionary of Ancient Geography*. His *Shakespeare*, indeed, which had been received with high approbation by the public, and gone through several editions, was this year republished by George

¹ Virgil, *Æn.* iv. 336.

² He however wrote, or partly wrote, an Epitaph on Mrs. Bell, wife of his friend John Bell, Esq., brother of the Rev. Dr. Bell, Prebendary of Westminster, which is printed in his Works. It is in English prose, and has so little of his manner that I did not believe he had any hand in it, till I was satisfied of the fact by the authority of Mr. Bell.

Steevens, Esq., a gentleman not only deeply skilled in ancient learning, and of very extensive reading in English literature, especially the early writers, but at the same time of acute discernment and elegant taste. It is almost unnecessary to say, that by his great and valuable additions to Dr. Johnson's work he justly obtained considerable reputation :

'Divisum imperium cum Jove Cæsar habet.'

TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

'DEAR SIR,—I have read your kind letter much more than the elegant Pindar which it accompanied. I am always glad to find myself not forgotten ; and to be forgotten by you would give me great uneasiness. My northern friends have never been unkind to me : I have from you, dear sir, testimonies of affection which I have not often been able to excite ; and Dr. Beattie rates the testimony which I was desirous of paying to his merit much higher than I should have thought it reasonable to expect.

'I have heard of your masquerade.¹ What says your synod to such innovations ? I am not studiously scrupulous, nor do I think a masquerade either evil in itself or very likely to be the occasion of evil ; yet as the world thinks it a very licentious relaxation of manners, I would not have been one of the *first* masquers in a country where no masquerade had ever been before.²

'A new edition of my great *Dictionary* is printed, from a copy which I was persuaded to revise ; but having made no preparation, I was able to do very little. Some superfluities I have expunged, and some faults I have corrected, and here and there have scattered a remark ; but the main fabric of the work remains as it was. I had looked very little into it since I wrote it, and, I think, I found it full as often better, as worse, than I expected.

¹ Given by a lady at Edinburgh.

² There had been masquerades in Scotland, but not for a very long time.

'Baretti and Davies have had a furious quarrel ; a quarrel, I think, irreconcilable. Dr. Goldsmith has a new comedy, which is expected in the spring. No name is yet given it. The chief diversion arises from a stratagem by which a lover is made to mistake his future father-in-law's house for an inn. This, you see, borders upon farce. The dialogue is quick and gay, and the incidents are so prepared as not to seem improbable.

'I am sorry that you lost your cause of intromission, because I yet think the arguments on your side unanswerable. But you seem, I think, to say that you gained reputation even by your defeat ; and reputation you will daily gain, if you keep Lord Auchinleck's precept in your mind, and endeavour to consolidate in your mind a firm and regular system of law, instead of picking up occasional fragments.

'My health seems in general to improve ; but I have been troubled for many weeks with a vexatious catarrh, which is sometimes sufficiently distressful. I have not found any great effects from bleeding and physic ; and am afraid that I must expect help from brighter days and softer air.

'Write to me now and then ; and whenever any good befalls you make haste to let me know it, for no one will rejoice at it more than, dear sir, your most humble servant,

'SAM. JOHNSON.

'*London, Feb. 22, 1773.*

'You continue to stand very high in the favour of Mrs. Thrale.'

While a former edition of my work was passing through the press, I was unexpectedly favoured with a packet from Philadelphia, from Mr. James Abercrombie, a gentleman of that country, who is pleased to honour me with very high praise of my *Life of Dr. Johnson*. To have the fame of my illustrious friend, and his faithful biographer, echoed from the New World is extremely flattering ; and my grateful acknowledgments shall be wafted across the Atlantic.

Mr. Abercrombie has politely conferred on me a considerable additional obligation by transmitting to me copies of two letters from Dr. Johnson to American gentlemen. 'Gladly, sir (says he), would I have sent you the originals, but being the only relics of the kind in America, they are considered by the possessors of such inestimable value that no possible consideration would induce them to part with them. In some future publication of yours relative to that great and good man they may perhaps be thought worthy of insertion.'

TO MR. B———D¹

'SIR,—That in the hurry of a sudden departure you should yet find leisure to consult my convenience is a degree of kindness, and an instance of regard, not only beyond my claims, but above my expectation. You are not mistaken in supposing that I set a high value on my American friends, and that you should confer a very valuable favour upon me by giving me an opportunity of keeping myself in their memory.

'I have taken the liberty of troubling you with a packet, to which I wish a safe and speedy conveyance, because I wish a safe and speedy voyage to him that conveys it.—I am, sir, your most humble servant,

SAM. JOHNSON.

'*London, Johnson's Court,*

Fleet Street, March 4, 1773.

TO THE REVEREND MR. WHITE

'DEAR SIR,—Your kindness for your friends accompanies you across the Atlantic. It was long since observed by Horace

¹ This gentleman, who now resides in America in a public character of considerable dignity, desired that his name might not be transcribed at full length.

² Now Doctor White, and Bishop of the Episcopal Church in Pennsylvania. During his first visit to England, in 1771, as a candidate for holy orders, he was several times in company with Dr. Johnson, who expressed a wish to see the edition of *Rasselas*, which Dr. White told him had been printed in America. Dr. White, on his return, immediately sent him a copy.

that no ship could leave care behind : you have been attended in your voyage by other powers—by benevolence and constancy ; and I hope care did not often show her face in their company.

‘I received the copy of *Rasselas*. The impression is not magnificent, but it flatters an author, because the printer seems to have expected that it would be scattered among the people. The little book has been well received, and is translated into Italian, French, German, and Dutch. It has now one honour more by an American edition.

‘I know not that much has happened since your departure that can engage your curiosity. Of all public transactions the whole world is now informed by the newspapers. Opposition seems to despond ; and the dissenters, though they have taken advantage of unsettled times, and a government much enfeebled, seem not likely to gain any immunities.

‘Dr. Goldsmith has a new comedy in rehearsal at Covent Garden, to which the manager predicts ill success. I hope he will be mistaken. I think it deserves a very kind reception.

‘I shall soon publish a new edition of my large *Dictionary*: I have been persuaded to revise it, and have mended some faults, but added little to its usefulness.

‘No book has been published since your departure of which much notice is taken. Faction only fills the town with pamphlets, and greater subjects are forgotten in the noise of discord.

‘Thus have I written, only to tell you how little I have to tell. Of myself I can only add, that having been afflicted many weeks with a very troublesome cough, I am now recovered.

‘I take the liberty which you give me of troubling you with a letter, of which you will please to fill up the direction.—I am, sir, your most humble servant,

SAM. JOHNSON.

‘*Johnson's Court, Fleet Street,
London, March 4, 1773.*’

On Saturday, April 3, the day after my arrival in London this year, I went to his house late in the evening, and sat with Mrs. Williams till he came home.

I found in the *London Chronicle* Dr. Goldsmith's apology to the public for beating Evans, a bookseller, on account of a paragraph¹ in a newspaper published by him, which Goldsmith thought impertinent to him and to a lady of his acquaintance. The apology was written so much in Dr. Johnson's manner that both Mrs. Williams and I supposed it to be his; but when he came home he soon undeceived us. When he said to Mrs. Williams, 'Well, Dr. Goldsmith's *manifesto* has got into your paper,' I asked him if Dr. Goldsmith had written it with an air, that made him see I suspected it was his, though subscribed by Goldsmith. JOHNSON: 'Sir, Dr. Goldsmith would no more have asked me to write such a thing as that for him than he would have asked me to feed him with a spoon, or to do anything else that denoted his imbecility. I as much believe that he wrote it as if I had seen him do it. Sir, had he shown it to any one friend, he would not have been allowed to publish it. He has, indeed, done it very well; but it is a foolish thing well done. I suppose he has been so much elated with the success of his new comedy that he has thought everything that concerned him must be of importance to the public.' BOSWELL: 'I fancy, sir, this is the first time that he has been engaged in such an adventure.' JOHNSON: 'Why, sir, I believe it is the first time he has *beat*; he may have *been beaten* before. This, sir, is a new plume to him.'

I mentioned Sir John Dalrymple's *Memoirs of Great*

¹ [The offence given was a long abusive letter in the *London Packet*. A particular account of this transaction, and Goldsmith's Vindication (for such it was, rather than an Apology) may be found in the new *Life* of that poet, prefixed to his Miscellaneous Works, in 4 vols. 8vo, pp. 105-108.—M.]

Britain and Ireland, and his discoveries to the prejudice of Lord Russell and Algernon Sidney. JOHNSON: 'Why, sir, everybody who had just notions of government thought them rascals before. It is well that all mankind now see them to be rascals.' BOSWELL: 'But, sir, may not those discoveries be true, without their being rascals?' JOHNSON: 'Consider, sir, would any of them have been willing to have had it known that they intrigued with France? Depend upon it, sir, he who does what he is afraid should be known has something rotten about him. This Dalrymple seems to be an honest fellow; for he tells equally what makes against both sides. But nothing can be poorer than his mode of writing, it is the mere bouncing of a schoolboy: Great He!¹ but greater She! and such stuff.'

I could not agree with him in this criticism; for though Sir John Dalrymple's style is not regularly formed in any respect, and one cannot help smiling sometimes at his affected *grandiloquence*, there is in his writing a pointed vivacity, and much of a gentlemanly spirit.

At Mr. Thrale's, in the evening, he repeated his usual paradoxical declamation against action in public speaking. 'Action can have no effect upon reasonable minds. It may augment noise, but it never can enforce argument. If you speak to a dog, you use action; you hold up your hand thus, because he is a brute; and in proportion as men are removed from brutes, action will have the less influence upon them.'

¹ [A bombastic ode of Oldham's on Ben Jonson begins thus: 'GREAT THOU!' which perhaps his namesake remembered.—M.]

MRS. THRALE: 'What then, sir, becomes of Demosthenes's saying: "Action, action, action!"?' JOHNSON: 'Demosthenes, madam, spoke to an assembly of brutes, to a barbarous people.'

I thought it extraordinary that he should deny the power of rhetorical action upon human nature, when it is proved by innumerable facts in all stages of society. Reasonable beings are not solely reasonable. They have fancies which may be pleased, passions which may be roused.

Lord Chesterfield being mentioned, Johnson remarked that almost all of that celebrated nobleman's witty sayings were puns. He, however, allowed the merit of good wit to his Lordship's saying of Lord Tyrawley and himself, when both very old and infirm: 'Tyrawley and I have been dead these two years; but we don't choose to have it known.'

He talked with an approbation of an intended edition of *The Spectator*, with notes, two volumes of which had been prepared by a gentleman eminent in the literary world, and the materials which he had collected for the remainder had been transferred to another hand. He observed that all works which describe manners require notes in sixty or seventy years, or less; and told us he had communicated all he knew that could throw light upon *The Spectator*. He said, 'Addison had made his Sir Andrew Freeport a true Whig, arguing against giving charity to beggars, and throwing out other such ungracious sentiments; but that he had thought better, and made amends by making him found a hospital for decayed farmers.' He called for the volume of *The Spectator* in which that account is contained, and read it aloud to us. He

read so well that everything acquired additional weight and grace from his utterance.

The conversation having turned on modern imitations of ancient ballads, and some one having praised their simplicity, he treated them with that ridicule which he always displayed when that subject was mentioned.

He disapproved of introducing Scripture phrases into secular discourse. 'This seemed to me a question of some difficulty. A Scripture expression may be used like a highly classical phrase, to produce an instantaneous strong impression, and it may be done without being at all improper. Yet I own there is danger, that applying the language of our sacred book to ordinary subjects may tend to lessen our reverence for it. If therefore it be introduced at all, it should be with very great caution.

On Thursday, April 8, I sat a good part of the evening with him, but he was very silent. He said, 'Burnet's *History of his Own Times* is very entertaining. The style, indeed, is mere chit-chat. I do not believe that Burnet intentionally lied: but he was so much prejudiced that he took no pains to find out the truth. He was like a man who resolves to regulate his time by a certain watch, but will not inquire whether the watch is right or not.'

Though he was not disposed to talk, he was unwilling that I should leave him; and when I looked at my watch, and told him it was twelve o'clock, he cried, 'What's that to you and me?' and ordered Frank to tell Mrs. Williams that we were coming to drink tea with her, which we did. It was settled that we should go to church together next day.

On the 9th of April, being Good Friday, I break-

fasted with him on tea and cross-buns, *Doctor* Levet, as Frank called him, making the tea. He carried me with him to the church of St. Clement Danes, where he had his seat, and his behaviour was, as I had imaged to myself, solemnly devout. I never shall forget the tremulous earnestness with which he pronounced the awful petition in the Litany: 'In the hour of death, and at the day of judgment, good Lord deliver us.'

We went to church both in the morning and evening. In the interval between the two services we did not dine, but he read in the Greek New Testament, and I turned over several of his books.

In Archbishop Laud's Diary I found the following passage, which I read to Dr. Johnson:

'1623. *February 1, Sunday.*—I stood by the most illustrious Prince Charles¹ at dinner. He was then very merry, and talked occasionally of many things with his attendants. Among other things, he said, that if he were necessitated to take any particular profession of life, he could not be a lawyer, adding his reasons: "I cannot (saith he) defend a bad, nor yield in a good cause."'

JOHNSON: 'Sir, this is false reasoning; because every cause has a bad side, and a lawyer is not overcome though the cause which he has endeavoured to support be determined against him.'

I told him that Goldsmith had said to me a few days before, 'As I take my shoes from the shoemaker, and my coat from the tailor, so I take my religion from the priest.' I regretted this loose way of talking. JOHNSON: 'Sir, he knows nothing; he has made up his mind about nothing.'

¹ Afterwards Charles I.

To my great surprise he asked me to dine with him on Easter Day. I never supposed that he had a dinner at his house ; for I had not then heard of any one of his friends having been entertained at his table. He told me, 'I generally have a meat-pie on Sunday : it is baked at a public oven, which is very properly allowed, because one man can attend it ; and thus the advantage is obtained of not keeping servants from church to dress dinners.'

April 11, being Easter Sunday, after having attended Divine Service at St. Paul's, I repaired to Dr. Johnson's. I had gratified my curiosity much in dining with Jean Jacques Rousseau while he lived in the wilds of Neufchatel : I had as great a curiosity to dine with Dr. Samuel Johnson in the dusky recess of a court in Fleet Street. I supposed we should scarcely have knives and forks, and only some strange, uncouth, ill-drest dish : but I found everything in very good order. We had no other company but Mrs. Williams, and a young woman whom I did not know. As a dinner here was considered as a singular phenomenon, and as I was frequently interrogated on the subject, my readers may perhaps be desirous to know our bill of fare. Foote, I remember, in allusion to Francis, the *negro*, was willing to suppose that our repast was *black broth*. But the fact was, that we had a very good soup, a boiled leg of lamb and spinach, a veal pie, and a rice pudding.

Of Dr. John Campbell, the author, he said, 'He is a very inquisitive and a very able man, and a man of good religious principles, though I am afraid he has been deficient in practice. Campbell is radically right ; and we may hope that in time there will be good practice.'

He owned that he thought Hawkesworth was one of his imitators, but he did not think Goldsmith was. Goldsmith, he said, had great merit. BOSWELL: 'But, sir, he is much indebted to you for his getting so high in the public estimation.' JOHNSON: 'Why, sir, he has perhaps got *sooner* to it by his intimacy with me.'

Goldsmith, though his vanity often excited him to occasional competition, had a very high regard for Johnson, which he had at this time expressed in the strongest manner in the Dedication of his Comedy, entitled *She Stoops to Conquer*.¹

Johnson observed that there were very few books printed in Scotland before the Union. He had seen a complete collection of them in the possession of the Hon. Archibald Campbell, a non-juring bishop.² I wish this collection had been kept entire. Many of them are in the library of the Faculty of Advocates at Edinburgh. I told Dr. Johnson that I had some intention to write the life of the learned and worthy Thomas Ruddiman. He said, 'I should take pleasure in helping you to do honour to him. But his farewell letter to the Faculty of Advocates, when he resigned the office of their Librarian, should have been in Latin.'

I put a question to him upon a fact in common life, which he could not answer, nor have I found any one else who could. What is the reason that women

¹ 'By inscribing this slight performance to you, I do not mean so much to compliment you as myself. It may do me some honour to inform the public that I have lived many years in intimacy with you. It may serve the interests of mankind also to inform them, that the greatest wit may be found in a character, without impairing the most unaffected piety.'

² See an account of this learned and respectable gentleman, and of his curious work on the 'Middle State,' *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides*, 3rd edit. p. 371.

servants, though obliged to be at the expense of purchasing their own clothes, have much lower wages than men servants, to whom a great proportion of that article is furnished, and when in fact our female house-servants work much harder than the male?¹

He told me that he had twelve or fourteen times attempted to keep a journal of his life, but never could persevere. He advised me to do it. 'The great thing to be recorded (said he) is the state of your own mind; and you should write down everything that you remember, for you cannot judge at first what is good or bad; and write immediately while the impression is fresh, for it will not be the same a week afterwards.'

I again solicited him to communicate to me the particulars of his early life. He said, 'You shall have them all for twopence. I hope you shall know a great deal more of me before you write my Life.' He mentioned to me this day many circumstances, which I wrote down when I went home, and have interwoven in the former part of this narrative.

On Tuesday, April 13, he and Dr. Goldsmith and I dined at General Oglethorpe's. Goldsmith expatiated on the common topic, that the race of our people was degenerated, and that this was owing to luxury. JOHNSON: 'Sir, in the first place, I doubt the fact. I believe there are as many tall men in England now as ever there were. But, secondly, supposing the stature of our people to be diminished, that is not owing to luxury; for, sir, consider to how very small a proportion of our people luxury can reach. Our

¹ [There is a greater variety of employments for men than for women: therefore the demand raises the price.—K.]

soldiery, surely, are not luxurious, who live on sixpence a day; and the same remark will apply to almost all the other classes. Luxury, so far as it reaches the poor, will do good to the race of people; it will strengthen and multiply them. Sir, no nation was ever hurt by luxury; for, as I said before, it can reach but to a very few. I admit that the great increase of commerce and manufactures hurts the military spirit of a people; because it produces a competition for something else than martial honours,—a competition for riches. It also hurts the bodies of the people; for you will observe, there is no man who works at any particular trade but you may know him from his appearance to do so. One part or the other of his body being more used than the rest, he is in some degree deformed: but, sir, that is not luxury. A tailor sits cross-legged; but that is not luxury.’

GOLDSMITH: ‘Come, you’re just going to the same place by another road.’ JOHNSON: ‘Nay, sir, I say that is not *luxury*. Let us take a walk from Charing Cross to Whitechapel, through, I suppose, the greatest series of shops in the world, what is there in any of these shops (if you except gin-shops) that can do any human being any harm?’

GOLDSMITH: ‘Well, sir, I’ll accept your challenge. The very next shop to Northumberland House is a pickle-shop.’

JOHNSON: ‘Well, sir; do we not know that a maid can in one afternoon make pickles sufficient to serve a whole family for a year? nay, that five pickle-shops can serve all the kingdom? Besides, sir, there is no harm done to anybody by the making of pickles or the eating of pickles.’

We drank tea with the ladies; and Goldsmith sung

Tony Lumpkin's song in his comedy *She Stoops to Conquer*, and a very pretty one, to an Irish tune,¹ which he had designed for Miss Hardcastle; but as Mrs. Bulkeley, who played the part, could not sing, it was left out. He afterwards wrote it down for me, by which means it was preserved, and now appears amongst his poems. Dr. Johnson, in his way home, stopped at my lodgings in Piccadilly, and sat with me, drinking tea a second time, till a late hour.

I told him that Mrs. Macaulay said she wondered how he could reconcile his political principles with his moral: his notions of inequality and subordination with wishing well to the happiness of all mankind, who might live so agreeably, had they all their portions of land and none to domineer over another. JOHNSON: 'Why, sir, I reconcile my principles very well, because mankind are happier in a state of inequality and subordination. Were they to be in this pretty state of equality they would soon degenerate into brutes;—they would become Monboddo's nation;—their tails would grow. Sir, all would be losers were all to work for all:—they would have no intellectual improvement. All intellectual improvement arises from leisure: all leisure arises from one working for another.'

Talking of the family of Stuart, he said, 'It should seem that the family at present on the throne has now established as good a right as the former family, by the long consent of the people; and that to disturb this right might be considered as culpable. At the same time I own that it is a very difficult question when considered with respect to the house of Stuart.

¹ The humours of Ballamagairy.

To oblige people to take oaths as to the disputed right is wrong. I know not whether I could take them : but I do not blame those who do.' So conscientious and so delicate was he upon this subject, which has occasioned so much clamour against him.

Talking of law cases, he said, 'The English reports, in general, are very poor : only the half of what has been said is taken down ; and of that half much is mistaken. Whereas, in Scotland, the arguments on each side are deliberately put in writing, to be considered by the Court. I think a collection of your cases upon subjects of importance, with the opinions of the Judges upon them, would be valuable.'

On Thursday, April 15, I dined with him and Dr. Goldsmith at General Paoli's. We found here Signor Martinelli of Florence, author of a History of England in Italian, printed at London.

I spoke of Allan Ramsay's *Gentle Shepherd*, in the Scottish dialect, as the best pastoral that had ever been written ; not only abounding with beautiful rural imagery, and just and pleasing sentiments, but being a real picture of manners ; and I offered to teach Dr. Johnson to understand it. 'No, sir (said he), I won't learn it. You shall retain your superiority by my not knowing it.'

This brought on a question whether one man is lessened by another's acquiring an equal degree of knowledge with him. Johnson asserted the affirmative. I maintained that the position might be true in those kinds of knowledge which produce wisdom, power, and force, so as to enable one man to have the government of others ; but that a man is not in any degree lessened by others knowing as well as he what

ends in mere pleasure :—‘eating fine fruits, drinking delicious wines, reading exquisite poetry.’

The General observed that Martinelli was a Whig. JOHNSON : ‘I am sorry for it. It shows the spirit of the times : he is obliged to temporise.’ BOSWELL : ‘I rather think, sir, that Toryism prevails in this reign.’ JOHNSON : ‘I know not why you should think so, sir. You see your friend Lord Lyttelton, a nobleman, is obliged in his *History* to write the most vulgar Whiggism.’

An animated debate took place whether Martinelli should continue his *History of England* to the present day. GOLDSMITH : ‘To be sure he should.’ JOHNSON : ‘No, sir ; he would give great offence. He would have to tell of almost all the living great what they do not wish told.’ GOLDSMITH : ‘It may, perhaps, be necessary for a native to be more cautious ; but a foreigner who comes among us without prejudice may be considered as holding the place of a judge, and may speak his mind freely.’ JOHNSON : ‘Sir, a foreigner, when he sends a work from the press ought to be on his guard against catching the error and mistaken enthusiasm of the people among whom he happens to be.’ GOLDSMITH : ‘Sir, he wants only to sell his *History* and to tell truth ; one an honest, the other a laudable motive.’ JOHNSON : ‘Sir, they are both laudable motives. It is laudable in a man to wish to live by his labours ; but he should write so as he may *live* by them, not so as he may be knocked on the head. I would advise him to be at Calais before he publishes his *History* of the present age. A foreigner who attaches himself to a political party in this country is in the worst state that can be imagined : he is looked

upon as a mere intermeddler. A native may do it from interest.' BOSWELL: 'Or principle.' GOLDSMITH: 'There are people who tell a hundred political lies every day and are not hurt by it. Surely, then, one may tell truth with safety.' JOHNSON: 'Why, sir, in the first place, he who tells a hundred lies has disarmed the force of his lies. But besides; a man had rather have a hundred lies told of him than one truth which he does not wish should be told.' GOLDSMITH: 'For my part, I'd tell truth and shame the devil.' JOHNSON: 'Yes, sir; but the devil will be angry. I wish to shame the devil as much as you do, but I should choose to be out of the reach of his claws.' GOLDSMITH: 'His claws can do you no harm when you have the shield of truth.'

It having been observed that there was little hospitality in London;—JOHNSON: 'Nay, sir, any man who has a name, or who has the power of pleasing, will be very generally invited in London. The man Sterne, I have been told, has had engagements for three months.' GOLDSMITH: 'And a very dull fellow.' JOHNSON: 'Why, no, sir.'

Martinelli told us that for several years he lived much with Charles Townshend, and that he ventured to tell him he was a bad joker. JOHNSON: 'Why, sir, thus much I can say upon the subject. One day he and a few more agreed to go and dine in the country, and each of them was to bring a friend in his carriage with him. Charles Townshend asked Fitzherbert to go with him, but told him, "You must find somebody to bring you back: I can only carry you there." Fitzherbert did not much like this arrangement. He, however, consented, observing sarcastically, "It will

do very well; for then the same jokes will serve you in returning as in going.”

An eminent public character being mentioned;—
JOHNSON: ‘I remember being present when he showed himself to be so corrupted, or at least something so different from what I think right, as to maintain that a Member of Parliament should go along with his party, right or wrong. Now, sir, this is so remote from native virtue, from scholastic virtue, that a good man must have undergone a great change before he can reconcile himself to such a doctrine. It is maintaining that you may lie to the public; for you lie when you call that right which you think wrong, or the reverse. A friend of ours, who is too much an echo of that gentleman, observed that a man who does not stick uniformly to a party is only waiting to be bought. Why, then, said I, he is only waiting to be what that gentleman is already.’

We talked of the King’s coming to see Goldsmith’s new play.—‘I wish he would,’ said Goldsmith: adding, however, with an affected indifference, ‘Not that it would do me the least good.’ JOHNSON: ‘Well then, sir, let us say it would do *him* good (laughing). No, sir, this affectation will not pass;—it is mighty idle. In such a state as ours, who would not wish to please the Chief Magistrate?’ GOLDSMITH: ‘I *do* wish to please him. I remember a line in Dryden,

“And every poet is the monarch’s friend.”

It ought to be reversed.’ JOHNSON: ‘Nay, there are finer lines in Dryden on this subject:

“For colleges on bounteous Kings depend,
And never rebel was to arts a friend.”

General Paoli observed that successful rebels might. MARTINELLI: 'Happy rebellions.' GOLDSMITH: 'We have no such phrase.' GENERAL PAOLI: But have you not the *thing*?' GOLDSMITH: 'Yes; all our *happy* revolutions. They have hurt our constitution, and will hurt it till we mend it by another happy revolution.' I never before discovered that my friend Goldsmith had so much of the old prejudice in him.

General Paoli, talking of Goldsmith's new play, said, '*Il a fait un compliment très gracieux à une certaine grande dame*'; meaning a Duchess of the first rank.

I expressed a doubt whether Goldsmith intended it, in order that I might hear the truth from himself. It perhaps was not quite fair to endeavour to bring him to a confession, as he might not wish to avow positively his taking part against the Court. He smiled and hesitated. The General at once relieved him by this beautiful image: '*Monsieur Goldsmith est comme la mer, qui jette des perles et beaucoup d'autres belles choses, sans s'en appercevoir.*' GOLDSMITH: '*Très bien dit, et très élégamment.*'

A person was mentioned who it was said could take down in shorthand the speeches in Parliament with perfect exactness. JOHNSON: 'Sir, it is impossible. I remember one Angel, who came to me to write for him a Preface or Dedication to a book upon shorthand, and he professed to write as fast as a man could speak. In order to try him, I took down a book and read while he wrote; and I favoured him, for I read more deliberately than usual. I had proceeded but a very little way when he begged I would desist, for he could not follow me.' Hearing now for the first time of this Preface or Dedication, I said, 'What an

expense, sir, do you put us to in buying books, to which you have written Prefaces or Dedications.'

JOHNSON: 'Why, I have dedicated to the Royal Family all round; that is to say, to the last generation of the Royal Family.'

GOLDSMITH: 'And perhaps, sir, not one sentence of wit in a whole Dedication.'

JOHNSON: 'Perhaps not, sir.' BOSWELL: 'What then is the reason for applying to a particular person to do that which any one may do as well?' JOHNSON: 'Why, sir, one man has greater readiness at doing it than another.'

I spoke of Mr. Harris of Salisbury as being a very learned man, and in particular an eminent Grecian.

JOHNSON: 'I am not sure of that. His friends give him out as such, but I know not who of his friends are able to judge of it.'

GOLDSMITH: 'He is what is much better: he is a worthy, humane man.'

JOHNSON: 'Nay, sir, that is not to the purpose of our argument; that will as much prove that he can play upon the

fiddle as well as Giardini, as that he is an eminent Grecian.'

GOLDSMITH: 'The greatest musical performers have but small emoluments. Giardini, I am told, does not get above seven hundred a year.'

JOHNSON: 'That is indeed but little for a man to get, who does best that which so many endeavour to do.

There is nothing, I think, in which the power of art is shown so much as in playing on the fiddle. In all

other things we can do something at first. Any man will forge a bar of iron if you give him a hammer;

not so well as a smith, but tolerably. A man will saw a piece of wood and make a box, though a clumsy

one; but give him a fiddle and a fiddle-stick, and he can do nothing.'

On Monday, April 19, he called on me with Mrs. Williams, in Mr. Strahan's coach, and carried me out to dine with Mr. Elphinston, at his Academy at Kensington. A printer having acquired a fortune sufficient to keep his coach, was a good topic for the credit of literature. Mrs. Williams said that another printer, Mr. Hamilton, had not waited so long as Mr. Strahan, but had kept his coach several years sooner. JOHNSON: 'He was in the right. Life is short. The sooner that a man begins to enjoy his wealth the better.'

Mr. Elphinston talked of a new book that was much admired, and asked Dr. Johnson if he had read it. JOHNSON: 'I have looked into it.' 'What (said Elphinston), have you not read it through?' Johnson, offended at being thus pressed, and so obliged to own his cursory mode of reading, answered tartly, 'No, sir: *do you read books through?*'

He this day again defended duelling, and put his argument upon what I have ever thought the most solid basis; that if public war be allowed to be consistent with morality, private war must be equally so. Indeed we may observe what strained arguments are used to reconcile war with the Christian religion. But, in my opinion, it is exceeding clear that duelling having better reasons for its barbarous violence, is more justifiable than a war in which thousands go forth without any cause of personal quarrel, and massacre each other.

On Wednesday, April 21, I dined with him at Mr. Thrale's. A gentleman attacked Garrick for being vain. JOHNSON: 'No wonder, sir, that he is vain; a man who is perpetually flattered in every mode that

can be conceived. So many bellows have blown the fire, that one wonders he is not by this time become a cinder.' BOSWELL: 'And such bellows too. Lord Mansfield with his cheeks like to burst; Lord Chatham like an Æolus. I have read such notes from them to him as were enough to turn his head.' JOHNSON: 'True. When he whom everybody else flatters, flatters me, I then am truly happy.' MRS. THRALE: 'The sentiment is in Congreve, I think.' JOHNSON: 'Yes, madam, in *The Way of the World*:

"If there's delight in love, 'tis when I see
That heart which others bleed for, bleed for me."

No, sir, I should not be surprised though Garrick chained the ocean and lashed the winds.' BOSWELL: 'Should it not be, sir, lashed the ocean and chained the winds?' JOHNSON: 'No, sir; recollect the original:

"In Corum atque Eurum solitus sævire flagellis
Barbarus, Æolio nunquam hoc in carcere passos,
Ipsium compedibus qui vinxerat Ennosigæum."'¹

This does very well when both the winds and the sea are personified, and mentioned by their mythological names, as in Juvenal; but when they are mentioned in plain language, the application of the epithets suggested by me is the most obvious; and accordingly my friend himself, in his imitation of the passage which describes Xerxes, has

'The waves he lashes, and enchains the wind.'²

¹ *Sat. x.* 180.

² [See also Butler, *Hudibras*, P. II. c. i. 845.

'A Persian Emperor *whipt* his grannam,
The *sea*, his mother Venus came on.'—M.]

The modes of living in different countries, and the various views with which men travel in quest of new scenes, having been talked of, a learned gentleman who holds a considerable office in the law, expatiated on the happiness of a savage life ; and mentioned an instance of an officer who had actually lived for some time in the wilds of America, of whom, when in that state, he quoted this reflection with an air of admiration, as if it had been deeply philosophical : ‘ Here am I, free and unrestrained, amidst the rude magnificence of Nature, with this Indian woman by my side, and this gun, with which I can procure food when I want it : what more can be desired for human happiness ? ’ It did not require much sagacity to foresee that such a sentiment would not be permitted to pass without due animadversion. JOHNSON : ‘ Do not allow yourself, sir, to be imposed upon by such gross absurdity. It is sad stuff ; it is brutish. If a bull could speak, he might as well exclaim,—Here am I with this cow and this grass ; what being can enjoy greater felicity ? ’

We talked of the melancholy end of a gentleman who had destroyed himself. JOHNSON : ‘ It was owing to imaginary difficulties in his affairs, which, had he talked of with any friend, would soon have vanished. ’ BOSWELL : ‘ Do you think, sir, that all who commit suicide are mad ? ’ JOHNSON : ‘ Sir, they are often not universally disordered in their intellects, but one passion presses so upon them, that they yield to it, and commit suicide, as a passionate man will stab another. ’ He added, ‘ I have often thought, that after a man has taken the resolution to kill himself, it is not courage in him to do anything, however desperate,

because he has nothing to fear.' GOLDSMITH: 'I don't see that.' JOHNSON: 'Nay, but my dear sir, why should you not see what every one else sees?' GOLDSMITH: 'It is for fear of something that he has resolved to kill himself: and will not that timid disposition restrain him?' JOHNSON: 'It does not signify that the fear of something made him resolve; it is upon the state of his mind, after the resolution is taken, that I argue. Suppose a man, either from fear or pride, or conscience, or whatever motive, has resolved to kill himself; when once the resolution is taken, he has nothing to fear. He may then go and take the King of Prussia by the nose, at the head of his army. He cannot fear the rack, who is resolved to kill himself. When Eustace Budgel was walking down to the Thames, determined to drown himself, he might, if he pleased, without any apprehension of danger, have turned aside, and first set fire to St. James's palace.'

On Tuesday, April 27, Mr. Beauclerk and I called on him in the morning. As we walked up Johnson's Court, I said, 'I have a veneration for this court'; and was glad to find that Beauclerk had the same reverential enthusiasm. We found him alone. We talked of Mr. Andrew Stuart's elegant and plausible Letters to Lord Mansfield: a copy of which had been sent by the author to Dr. Johnson. JOHNSON: 'They have not answered the end. They have not been talked of; I have never heard of them. This is owing to their not being sold. People seldom read a book which is given to them; and few are given. The way to spread a work is to sell it at a low price. No man will send to buy a thing that costs even sixpence,

without an intention to read it.' BOSWELL: 'May it not be doubted, sir, whether it be proper to publish letters, arraigning the ultimate decision of an important cause by the supreme judicature of the nation?'

JOHNSON: 'No, sir, I do not think it was wrong to publish these letters. If they are thought to do harm, why not answer them? But they will do no harm; if Mr. Douglas be indeed the son of Lady Jane he cannot be hurt: if he be not her son, and yet has the great estate of the family of Douglas, he may well submit to have a pamphlet against him by Andrew Stuart. Sir, I think such a publication does good, as it does good to show us the possibilities of human life. And, sir, you will not say that the Douglas cause was a cause of easy decision, when it divided your court as much as it could do, to be determined at all. When your judges are seven and seven, the casting vote of the president must be given on one side or other; no matter, for my argument, on which, one or the other *must* be taken; as when I am to move, there is no matter which leg I move first. And then, sir, it was otherwise determined here. No, sir, a more dubious determination of any question cannot be imagined.'

¹

He said, 'Goldsmith should not be for ever attempting to shine in conversation: he has not temper for it, he is so much mortified when he fails. Sir, a game of jokes is composed partly of skill, partly of

¹ I regretted that Dr. Johnson never took the trouble to study a question which interested nations. He would not even read a pamphlet which I wrote upon it, entitled *The Essence of the Douglas Cause*; which, I have reason to flatter myself, had considerable effect in favour of Mr. Douglas; of whose legitimate filiation I was then, and am still, firmly convinced. Let me add, that no fact can be more respectably ascertained, than by the judgment of the most august tribunal in the world; a judgment in which Lord Mansfield and Lord Camden united in 1769, and from which only five of a numerous body entered a protest.

chance ; a man may be beat at times by one who has not the tenth part of his wit. Now Goldsmith's putting himself against another, is like a man laying a hundred to one who cannot spare the hundred. It is not worth a man's while. A man should not lay a hundred to one unless he can easily spare it, though he has a hundred chances for him : he can get but a guinea, and he may lose a hundred. Goldsmith is in this state. When he contends, if he gets the better, it is a very little addition to a man of his literary reputation : if he does not get the better, he is miserably vexed.'

Johnson's own superlative powers of wit set him above any risk of such uneasiness. Garrick had remarked to me of him, a few days before, ' Rabelais and all other wits are nothing compared with him. You may be diverted by them ; but Johnson gives you a forcible hug, and shakes laughter out of you, whether you will or no.'

Goldsmith, however, was often very fortunate in his witty contests, even when he entered the lists with Johnson himself. Sir Joshua Reynolds was in company with them one day, when Goldsmith said, that he thought he could write a good fable, mentioned the simplicity which that kind of composition requires, and observed, that in most fables the animals introduced seldom talk in character. ' For instance (said he), the fable of the little fishes, who saw birds fly over their heads, and envying them, petitioned Jupiter to be changed into birds. The skill (continued he) consists in making them talk like little fishes.' While he indulged himself in this fanciful reverie, he observed Johnson shaking his sides, and laughing.

Upon which he smartly proceeded, ‘Why, Dr. Johnson, this is not so easy as you seem to think; for if you were to make little fishes talk, they would talk like whales.’

Johnson, though remarkable for his great variety of composition, never exercised his talents in fable, except we allow his beautiful tale, published in Mrs. Williams’s *Miscellanies*, to be of that species. I have, however, found among his manuscript collections the following sketch of one:

‘Glow-worm¹ lying in the garden saw a candle in a neighbouring palace,—and complained of the littleness of his own light;—another observed—wait a little;—soon dark,—have outlasted πολλ [many] of these glaring lights which are only brighter as they haste to nothing.’

On Thursday, April 29, I dined with him at General Oglethorpe’s, where were Sir Joshua Reynolds, Mr. Langton, Dr. Goldsmith, and Mr. Thrale. I was very desirous to get Dr. Johnson absolutely fixed in his resolution to go with me to the Hebrides this year; and I told him that I had received a letter from Dr. Robertson, the historian, upon the subject, with which he was much pleased, and now talked in such a manner of his long intended tour, that I was satisfied he meant to fulfil his engagement.

The custom of eating dogs at Otaheite being mentioned, Goldsmith observed that this was also a custom in China; that a dog-butcher is as common there as any other butcher; and that when he walks abroad all the dogs fall on him. JOHNSON: ‘That is not

¹ [It has already been observed, that one of his first Essays was a Latin poem on a glow-worm; but whether it be anywhere extant has not been ascertained.—M.]

owing to his killing dogs, sir. I remember a butcher at Lichfield, whom a dog, that was in the house where I lived, always attacked. It is the smell of carnage which provokes this, let the animals he has killed be what they may.' GOLDSMITH: 'Yes, there is a general abhorrence in animals at the signs of massacre. If you put a tub full of blood into a stable, the horses are like to go mad.' JOHNSON: 'I doubt that.' GOLDSMITH: 'Nay, sir, it is a fact well authenticated.' THRALE: 'You had better prove it before you put it into your book on natural history. You may do it in my stable if you will.' JOHNSON: 'Nay, sir, I would not have him prove it. If he is content to take his information from others, he may get through his book with little trouble, and without much endangering his reputation. But if he makes experiments for so comprehensive a book as his, there would be no end to them; his erroneous assertions would then fall upon himself; and he might be blamed for not having made experiments as to every particular.'

The character of Mallet having been introduced, and spoken of slightly by Goldsmith; JOHNSON: 'Why, sir, Mallet had talents enough to keep his literary reputation alive as long as he himself lived; and that, let me tell you, is a good deal.' GOLDSMITH: 'But I cannot agree that it was so. His literary reputation was dead long before his natural death.' I consider an author's literary reputation to be alive only while his name will ensure a good price for his copy from the booksellers. I will get you (to Johnson) a hundred guineas for anything whatever that you shall write, if you put your name to it.'

Dr. Goldsmith's new play, *She Stoops to Conquer*,

being mentioned; JOHNSON: 'I know of no comedy for many years that has so much exhilarated an audience, that has answered so much the great end of comedy—making an audience merry.'

Goldsmith having said, that Garrick's compliment to the Queen, which he introduced into the play of *The Chances*, which he had altered and revised this year, was mean and gross flattery;—JOHNSON: 'Why, sir, I would not *write*, I would not give solemnly under my hand, a character beyond what I thought really true; but a speech on the stage, let it flatter ever so extravagantly, is formular. It has always been formular to flatter kings and queens; so much so, that even in our church service we have "our most religious King," used indiscriminately, whoever is King. Nay, they even flatter themselves;—"we have been graciously pleased to grant."—No modern flattery, however, is so gross as that of the Augustan age, where the Emperor was deified: "*Præsens Divus habebitur Augustus*." And as to meanness (rising into warmth), how is it mean in a player,—a showman,—a fellow who exhibits himself for a shilling, to flatter his Queen? The attempt, indeed, was dangerous; for if it had missed, what became of Garrick, and what became of the Queen? As Sir William Temple says of a great general, it is necessary not only that his designs be formed in a masterly manner, but that they should be attended with success. Sir, it is right, at a time when the Royal Family is not generally liked, to let it be seen that the people like at least one of them.' SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS: 'I do not perceive why the profession of a player should be despised; for the great and ultimate end of all the

employments of mankind is to produce amusement. Garrick produces more amusement than anybody. BOSWELL: 'You say, Dr. Johnson, that Garrick exhibits himself for a shilling. In this respect he is only on a footing with a lawyer, who exhibits himself for his fee, and even will maintain any nonsense or absurdity, if the case require it. Garrick refuses a play or a part which he does not like: a lawyer never refuses.' JOHNSON: 'Why, sir, what does this prove? only that a lawyer is worse. Boswell is now like Jack in *The Tale of a Tub*, who, when he is puzzled by an argument, hangs himself. He thinks I shall cut him down, but I'll let him hang' (laughing vociferously). SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS: 'Mr. Boswell thinks that the profession of a lawyer being unquestionably honourable, if he can show the profession of a player to be more honourable, he proves his argument.'

On Friday, April 30, I dined with him at Mr. Beauchlerk's, where were Lord Charlemont, Sir Joshua Reynolds, and some more members of the Literary Club, whom he had obligingly invited to meet me, as I was this evening to be balloted for as candidate for admission into that distinguished society. Johnson had done me the honour to propose me, and Beauchlerk was very zealous for me.

Goldsmith being mentioned;—JOHNSON: 'It is amazing how little Goldsmith knows. He seldom comes where he is not more ignorant than any one else.' SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS: 'Yet there is no man whose company is more liked.' JOHNSON: 'To be sure, sir. When people find a man of the most distinguished abilities as a writer, their inferior while he is with them, it must be highly gratifying to them.

What Goldsmith comically says of himself is very true,—he always gets the better when he argues alone ; meaning, that he is master of a subject in his study, and can write well upon it ; but when he comes into company, grows confused, and unable to talk. Take him as a poet, his “Traveller” is a very fine performance ; ay, and so is his “Deserted Village,” were it not sometimes too much the echo of his “Traveller.” Whether, indeed, we take him as a poet,—as a comic writer,—or as an historian, he stands in the first class.’ BOSWELL : ‘An historian ! My dear sir, you surely will not rank his compilation of the Roman History with the works of other historians of this age ?’ JOHNSON : ‘Why, who are before him ?’ BOSWELL : ‘Hume — Robertson — Lord Lyttelton.’ JOHNSON (his antipathy to the Scotch beginning to rise) : ‘I have not read Hume ; but, doubtless, Goldsmith’s History is better than the *verbiage* of Robertson, or the foppery of Dalrymple.’ BOSWELL : ‘Will you not admit the superiority of Robertson, in whose History we find such penetration—such painting ?’ JOHNSON : ‘Sir, you must consider how that penetration and that painting are employed. It is not history, it is imagination. He who describes what he never saw draws from fancy. Robertson paints minds as Sir Joshua paints faces in a history-piece : he imagines an heroic countenance. You must look upon Robertson’s work as romance, and try it by that standard. History it is not. Besides, sir, it is the great excellence of a writer to put into his book as much as his book will hold. Goldsmith has done this in his history. Now, Robertson might have put twice as much into his book. Robertson is like a man who has packed gold in wool ;

the wool takes up more room than the gold. No, sir, I always thought Robertson would be crushed by his own weight,—would be buried under his own ornaments. Goldsmith tells you shortly all you want to know: Robertson detains you a great deal too long. No man will read Robertson's cumbrous detail a second time; but Goldsmith's plain narrative will please again and again. I would say to Robertson what an old tutor of a college said to one of his pupils, "Read over your compositions, and wherever you meet with a passage which you think is particularly fine, strike it out." Goldsmith's abridgment is better than that of Lucius Florus or Eutropius; and I will venture to say, that if you compare him with Vertot, in the same places of the Roman History, you will find that he excels Vertot. Sir, he has the art of compiling, and of saying everything he has to say in a pleasing manner. He is now writing a Natural History, and will make it as entertaining as a Persian Tale.'

I cannot dismiss the present topic without observing that it is probable that Dr. Johnson, who owned that he often "talked for victory," rather urged plausible objections to Dr. Robertson's excellent historical works, in the ardour of contest, than expressed his real and decided opinion; for it is not easy to suppose that he should so widely differ from the rest of the literary world.

JOHNSON: 'I remember once being with Goldsmith in Westminster Abbey. While we surveyed the Poet's Corner, I said to him:

"Forsitan et nostrum nomen miscebitur istis."¹

¹ Ovid. *de Art. Amand.* i. iii. 13.

When we got to Temple Bar he stopped me, pointed to the heads upon it, and slyly whispered me :

“Forsitan et nostrum nomen miscebitur ISTIS.”¹

Johnson praised John Bunyan highly. ‘His *Pilgrim’s Progress* has great merit, both for invention, imagination, and the conduct of the story ; and it has had the best evidence of its merit, the general and continued approbation of mankind. Few books, I believe, have had a more extensive sale. It is remarkable that it begins very much like the poem of Dante ; yet there was no translation of Dante when Bunyan wrote. There is reason to think that he had read Spenser.’

A proposition which had been agitated, that monuments to eminent persons should, for the time to come, be erected in St. Paul’s Church as well as in Westminster Abbey, was mentioned ; and it was asked who should be honoured by having his monument first erected there. Somebody suggested Pope. JOHNSON : ‘Why, sir, as Pope was a Roman Catholic, I would not have his to be first. I think Milton’s rather should have the precedence.² I think more highly of him now than I did at twenty. There is more thinking in him and in Butler than in any of our poets.’

Some of the company expressed a wonder why the author of so excellent a book as *The Whole Duty of Man* should conceal himself.³ JOHNSON : ‘There may

¹ In allusion to Dr. Johnson’s supposed political principles, and perhaps his own.

² Here is another instance of his high admiration of Milton as a poet, notwithstanding his just abhorrence of that sour Republican’s political principles. His candour and discrimination are equally conspicuous. Let us hear no more of his ‘injustice to Milton.’

³ [In a manuscript in the Bodleian Library several circumstances are

be different reasons assigned for this, any one or which would be very sufficient. He may have been a clergyman, and may have thought that his religious counsels would have less weight when known to come from a man whose profession was Theology. He may have been a man whose practice was not suitable to his principles, so that his character might injure the effect of his book, which he had written in a season of penitence. Or he may have been a man of rigid self-denial, so that he would have no reward for his pious labours while in this world, but refer it all to a future state.'

The gentlemen went away to their club, and I was left at Beauclerk's till the fate of my election should be announced to me. I sat in a state of anxiety which even the charming conversation of Lady Di Beauclerk could not entirely dissipate. In a short time I received the agreeable intelligence that I was chosen. I hastened to the place of meeting, and was introduced to such a society as can seldom be found. Mr. Edmund Burke, whom I then saw for the first time, and whose splendid talents had long made me ardently wish for his acquaintance; Dr. Nugent, Mr. Garrick, Dr. Goldsmith, Mr. (afterwards Sir William) Jones, and the company with whom I had dined. Upon my entrance Johnson placed himself behind a chair, on which he leaned as on a desk or pulpit, and with humorous formality gave me a charge, pointing out the conduct expected from me as a good member of this club.

stated, which strongly incline me to believe that Dr. Accepted Frewen, Archbishop of York, was the author of this work.—M.]

[The authorship is still undecided, and in the meantime the work has lost all its popularity.—A. B.]

Goldsmith produced some very absurd verses which had been publicly recited to an audience for money. JOHNSON: 'I can match this nonsense. There was a poem called "Eugenio," which came out some years ago, and concludes thus :

"And now, ye trifling, self-assuming elves,
Brimful of pride, of nothing, of yourselves,
Survey Eugenio, view him o'er and o'er,
Then sink into yourselves, and be no more."¹

Nay, Dryden, in his poem on the Royal Society, has these lines :

"Then we upon our globe's last verge shall go,
And see the ocean leaning on the sky ;
From thence our rolling neighbours we shall know,
And on the lunar world securely pry."

Talking of puns, Johnson, who had a great contempt for that species of wit, deigned to allow that there was one good pun in 'Menagiana,' I think on the word *corps*.²

¹ Dr. Johnson's memory here was not perfectly accurate : 'Eugenio' does not conclude thus. There are eight more lines after the last of those quoted by him ; and the passage which he meant to recite is as follows :

'Say now ye fluttering, poor assuming elves,
Stark full of pride, of folly, of—yourselves ;
Say where's the wretch of all your impious crew,
Who dares confront his character to view ?
Behold Eugenio, view him o'er and o'er,
Then sink into yourselves, and be no more.'

Mr. Reed informs me that the author of 'Eugenio,' Thomas Beech, a wine merchant at Wrexham in Denbighshire, soon after its publication, viz., 17th May 1737, cut his own throat ; and that it appears by Swift's works, that the poem had been shown to him and received some of his corrections. Johnson had read 'Eugenio' on his first coming to town, for we see it mentioned in one of his letters to Mr. Cave, which has been inserted in this work.

² I formerly thought that I had perhaps mistaken the word, and imagined it to be *Corps*, from its similarity of sound to the real one. For an accurate and shrewd unknown gentleman, to whom I am indebted for some remarks on my work, observes on this passage—'Q.

Much pleasant conversation passed which Johnson relished with great good humour. But his conversation alone, or what led to it, or was interwoven with it, is the business of this work.

On Saturday, May 1, we dined by ourselves at our old rendezvous, the Mitre tavern. He was placid, but not much disposed to talk. He observed, that 'The Irish mix better with the English than the Scotch do; their language is nearer to English; as a proof of which, they succeed very well as players, which Scotchmen do not. Then, sir, they have not that extreme nationality which we find in the Scotch. I will do you, Boswell, the justice to say, that you are the most *unscottified* of your countrymen. You are almost the only instance of a Scotchman that I have known, who did not at every other sentence bring in some other Scotchman.'

We drank tea with Mrs. Williams. I introduced a question which has been much agitated in the Church of Scotland, whether the claim of lay-patrons to present ministers to parishes be well founded; and, supposing it to be well founded, whether it ought to be exercised without the concurrence of the people?

if not on the word *Fort*? A vociferous French preacher said of Bourdaloue, "Il preche *fort bien*, et moi *bien fort*."—'Menagiana.' See also *Anecdotes Littéraires*, Article, Bourdaloue.' But my ingenious and obliging correspondent, Mr. Abercrombie of Philadelphia, has pointed out to me the following passage in 'Menagiana,' which renders the preceding conjecture unnecessary, and confirms my original statement:

'Mad^{me} de Bourdonne, Chanoinesse de Remiremont, venoit d'entendre un discours plein de feu et d'esprit, mais fort peu solide, et tres irregulier. Une de ses amies, qui y prenoit intérêt pour l'orateur, lui dit en sortant, "Eh bien, Mad^{me} que vous semble-t-il de ce que vous venez d'entendre? Qu'il y a d'esprit?"—"Il y a tant," repondit Mad^{me} de Bourdonne, "que je n'y ai pas vû de *corps*."—'Menagiana,' tome ii. p. 64, Amsterd. 1713.—BOSWELL.

[See interesting article on 'Menagiana' by Sir M. E. Grant Duff, in the *Cornhill Magazine*, July 1896.—A. B.]

That Church is composed of a series of judicatures : a Presbytery, a Synod, and finally, a General Assembly ; before all of which this matter may be contended : and in some cases the Presbytery having refused to induct or *settle*, as they call it, the person presented by the patron, it has been found necessary to appeal to the General Assembly. He said, I might see the subject well treated in the ‘Defence of Pluralities’ ; and although he thought that a patron should exercise his right with tenderness to the inclinations of the people of a parish, he was very clear as to his right. Then supposing the question to be pleaded before the General Assembly, he dictated to me what follows :

‘Against the right of patrons is commonly opposed, by the inferior judicatures, the plea of conscience. Their conscience tells them that the people ought to choose their pastor ; their conscience tells them that they ought not to impose upon a congregation a minister ungrateful and unacceptable to his auditors. Conscience is nothing more than a conviction felt by ourselves of something to be done, or something to be avoided ; and in questions of simple unperplexed morality, conscience is very often a guide that may be trusted. But before conscience can determine, the state of the question is supposed to be completely known. In questions of law, or of fact, conscience is very often confounded with opinion. No man’s conscience can tell him the right of another man ; they must be known by rational investigation or historical inquiry. Opinion, which he that holds it may call his conscience, may teach some men that religion would be promoted, and quiet preserved, by granting to the people universally the choice of their ministers. But it is a conscience very ill informed that violates the rights of one man, for the convenience of another. Religion cannot be promoted by injustice : and it was never yet found that a popular election was very quietly transacted.

‘That justice would be violated by transferring to the people the right of patronage, is apparent to all who know whence that right had its original. The right of patronage

was not at first a privilege torn by power from unresisting poverty. It is not an authority at first usurped in times of ignorance, and established only by succession and by precedents. It is not a grant capriciously made from a higher tyrant to a lower. It is a right dearly purchased by the first possessors, and justly inherited by those that succeeded them. When Christianity was established in this island, a regular mode of public worship was prescribed. Public worship requires a public place; and the proprietors of lands, as they were converted, built churches for their families and their vassals. For the maintenance of ministers, they settled a certain portion of their lands; and a district through which each minister was required to extend his care, was, by that circumscription, constituted a parish. This is a position so generally received in England, that the extent of a manor and of a parish are regularly received for each other. The churches which the proprietors of lands had thus built and thus endowed, they justly thought themselves entitled to provide with ministers; and where the episcopal government prevails, the bishop has no power to reject a man nominated by the patron, but for some crime that might exclude him from the priesthood. For the endowment of the church being the gift of the landlord, he was consequently at liberty to give it according to his choice, to any man capable of performing the holy offices. The people did not choose him, because the people did not pay him.

‘We hear it sometimes urged that this original right is passed out of memory, and is obliterated and obscured by many translations of property and changes of government; that scarce any church is now in the hands of the heirs of the builders; and that the present persons have entered subsequently upon the pretended rights by a thousand accidental and unknown causes. Much of this, perhaps, is true. But how is the right of patronage extinguished? If the right followed the lands, it is possessed by the same equity by which the lands are possessed. It is, in effect, part of the manor, and protected by the same laws with every other privilege. Let us suppose an estate forfeited by treason, and granted by the Crown to a new family. With the lands were forfeited all the rights appendant to those lands: by the same

power that grants the lands, the rights also are granted. The right lost to the patron falls not to the people, but is either retained by the Crown, or, what to the people is the same thing, is by the Crown given away. Let it change hands ever so often, it is possessed by him that receives it with the same right as it was conveyed. It may, indeed, like all our possessions, be forcibly seized or fraudulently obtained. But no injury is still done to the people; for what they never had, they have never lost. Caius may usurp the right of Titius, but neither Caius nor Titius injure the people; and no man's conscience, however tender or however active, can prompt him to restore what may be proved to have been never taken away. Supposing, what I think cannot be proved, that a popular election of ministers were to be desired, our desires are not the measure of equity. It were to be desired that power should be only in the hands of the merciful, and riches in the possession of the generous; but the law must leave both riches and power where it finds them: and must often leave riches to the covetous, and power with the cruel. Convenience may be a rule in little things, where no other rule has been established. But as the great end of government is to give every man his own, no inconvenience is greater than that of making right uncertain. Nor is any man more an enemy to public peace, than he who fills weak heads with imaginary claims, and breaks the series of civil subordination, by inciting the lower classes of mankind to encroach upon the higher.

‘Having thus shown that the right of patronage, being originally purchased, may be legally transferred, and that it is now in the hands of lawful possessors, at least as certainly as any other right;—we have left to the advocates of the people no other plea than that of convenience. Let us, therefore, now consider what the people would really gain by a general abolition of the right of patronage. What is most to be desired by such a change is that the country should be supplied with better ministers. But why should we suppose that the parish will make a wiser choice than the patron? If we suppose mankind actuated by interest, the patron is more likely to choose with caution, because he will suffer more by choosing wrong. By the deficiencies of his minister, or by his

vices, he is equally offended with the rest of the congregation; but he will have this reason more to lament them, that they will be imputed to his absurdity or corruption. The qualifications of a minister are well known to be learning and piety. Of his learning the patron is probably the only judge in the parish; and of his piety not less a judge than others; and is more likely to inquire minutely and diligently before he gives a presentation, than one of the parochial rabble, who can give nothing but a vote. It may be urged, that though the parish might not choose better ministers, they would at least choose ministers whom they like better, and who would therefore officiate with greater efficacy. That ignorance and perverseness should always obtain what they like, was never considered as the end of government; of which it is the great and standing benefit, that the wise see for the simple, and the regular act for the capricious. But that this argument supposes the people capable of judging, and resolute to act according to their best judgments, though this be sufficiently absurd, it is not all its absurdity. It supposes not only wisdom, but unanimity in those, who upon no other occasions are unanimous or wise. If by some strange concurrence all the voices of a parish should unite in the choice of any single man, though I could not charge the patron with injustice for presenting a minister, I should censure him as unkind and injudicious. But it is evident that as in all other popular elections there will be contrariety of judgment and acrimony of passion, a parish upon every vacancy would break into factions, and the contest for the choice of a minister would set neighbours at variance, and bring discord into families. The minister would be taught all the arts of a candidate, would flatter some, and bribe others: and the electors, as in all other cases, would call for holidays and ale, and break the heads of each other during the jollity of the canvass. The time must, however, come at last, when one of the factions must prevail, and one of the ministers get possession of the church. On what terms does he enter upon his ministry but those of enmity with half his parish? By what prudence or what diligence can he hope to conciliate the affections of that party by whose defeat he has obtained his living? Every man who voted against him will enter the church with hanging head

and downcast eyes, afraid to encounter that neighbour by whose vote and influence he has been overpowered. He will hate his neighbour for opposing him, and his minister for having prospered by the opposition; and as he will never see him but with pain, he will never see him but with hatred. Of a minister presented by the patron, the parish has seldom anything worse to say than that they do not know him. Of a minister chosen by a popular contest, all those who do not favour him, have nursed up in their bosoms principles of hatred and reasons of rejection. Anger is excited principally by pride. The pride of a common man is very little exasperated by the supposed usurpation of an acknowledged superior. He bears only his little share of a general evil, and suffers in common with the whole parish: but when the contest is between equals, the defeat has many aggravations; and he that is defeated by his next neighbour is seldom satisfied without some revenge: and it is hard to say what bitterness of malignity would prevail in a parish where these elections should happen to be frequent, and the enmity of opposition should be re-kindled before it had cooled.'

Though I present to my readers Dr. Johnson's masterly thoughts on the subject, I think it proper to declare, that notwithstanding I am myself a lay-patron, I do not entirely subscribe to his opinion.

On Friday, May 7, I breakfasted with him at Mr. Thrale's in the Borough. While we were alone, I endeavoured as well as I could to apologise for a lady who had been divorced from her husband by act of Parliament. I said that he had used her very ill, had behaved brutally to her, and that she could not continue to live with him without having her delicacy contaminated; that all affection for him was thus destroyed; that the essence of conjugal union being gone, there remained only a cold form, a mere civil obligation; that she was in the prime of life, with qualities to produce happiness; that these ought not

to be lost; and, that the gentleman on whose account she was divorced had gained her heart while thus unhappily situated. Seduced, perhaps, by the charms of the lady in question, I thus attempted to palliate what I was sensible could not be justified; for when I had finished my harangue, my venerable friend gave me a proper check; 'My dear sir, never accustom your mind to mingle virtue and vice. The woman's a whore, and there's an end on't.'

He described the father of one of his friends thus: 'Sir, he was so exuberant a talker at public meetings that the gentlemen of his county were afraid of him. No business could be done for his declamation.'

He did not give me full credit when I mentioned that I had carried on a short conversation by signs with some Esquimaux, who were then in London, particularly with one of them who was a priest. He thought I could not make them understand me. No man was more incredulous as to particular facts which were at all extraordinary; and therefore no man was more scrupulously inquisitive in order to discover the truth.

I dined with him this day at the house of my friends, Messrs. Edward and Charles Dilly, booksellers in the Poultry; there were present their elder brother Mr. Dilly of Bedfordshire, Dr. Goldsmith, Mr. Langton, Mr. Claxton, Reverend Dr. Mayo, a dissenting minister, the Reverend Mr. Toplady,¹ and my friend the Reverend Mr. Temple.

Hawkesworth's compilation of the voyages to the South Sea being mentioned;—JOHNSON: 'Sir, if you

¹ [Author of 'Rock of Ages.'—A. B.]

talk of it as a subject of commerce, it will be gainful ; if as a book that is to increase human knowledge, I believe there will not be much of that. Hawkesworth can tell only what the voyagers have told him ; and they have found very little, only one new animal, I think.' BOSWELL : ' But many insects, sir.' JOHNSON : ' Why, sir, as to insects, Ray reckons of British insects twenty thousand species. They might have stayed at home and discovered enough in that way.'

Talking of birds, I mentioned Mr. Daines Barrington's ingenious Essay against the received notion of their migration. JOHNSON : ' I think we have as good evidence for the migration of woodcocks as can be desired. We find they disappear at a certain time of the year, and appear again at a certain time of the year ; and some of them, when weary in their flight, have been known to alight on the rigging of ships far out at sea.' One of the company observed that there had been instances of some of them found in summer in Essex. JOHNSON : ' Sir, that strengthens our argument. *Exceptio probat regulam*. Some being found shows that, if all remained, many would be found. A few sick or lame ones may be found.' GOLDSMITH : ' There is a partial migration of the swallows ; the stronger ones migrate, the others do not.'

BOSWELL : ' I am well assured that the people of Otaheite who have the bread-tree, the fruit of which serves them for bread, laughed heartily when they were informed of the tedious process necessary with us to have bread ;—plowing, sowing, harrowing, reaping, threshing, grinding, baking.' JOHNSON : ' Why, sir, all ignorant savages will laugh when they are told of the advantages of civilised life. Were you to tell men

who live without houses, how we pile up brick upon brick, and rafter upon rafter, and that after a house is raised to a certain height, a man tumbles off a scaffold and breaks his neck, he would laugh heartily at our folly in building ; but it does not follow that men are better without houses. No, sir (holding up a slice of a good loaf), this is better than the bread-tree.'

He repeated an argument, which is to be found in his *Rambler*, against the notion that the brute creation is endowed with the faculty of reason : 'Birds build by instinct ; they never improve ; they build their first nest as well as any one they ever build.' GOLDSMITH : 'Yet we see if you take away a bird's nest with the eggs in it, she will make a slighter nest and lay again.' JOHNSON : 'Sir, that is because at first she has full time and makes her nest deliberately. In the case you mention she is pressed to lay, and must therefore make her nest quickly, and consequently it will be slight.' GOLDSMITH : 'The nidification of birds is what is least known in natural history, though one of the most curious things in it.'

I introduced the subject of toleration. JOHNSON : 'Every society has a right to preserve public peace and order, and therefore has a good right to prohibit the propagation of opinions which have a dangerous tendency. To say the *magistrate* has this right, is using an inadequate word : it is the *society* for which the magistrate is agent. He may be morally or theologically wrong in restraining the propagation of opinions which he thinks dangerous, but he is politically right.' MAYO : 'I of am opinion, sir, that every man is entitled to liberty of conscience in religion, and that the magistrate cannot restrain that right.' JOHNSON :

‘Sir, I agree with you. Every man has a right to liberty of conscience, and with that the magistrate cannot interfere. People confound liberty of thinking with liberty of talking; nay, with liberty of preaching. Every man has a physical right to think as he pleases; for it cannot be discovered how he thinks. He has not a moral right, for he ought to inform himself, and think justly. But, sir, no member of a society has a right to *teach* any doctrine contrary to what the society holds to be true.¹ The magistrate, I say, may be wrong in what he thinks; but while he thinks himself right, he may and ought to enforce what he thinks.’ MAYO: ‘Then, sir, we are to remain always in error, and truth never can prevail; and the magistrate was right in persecuting the first Christians.’ JOHNSON: ‘Sir, the only method by which religious truth can be established is by martyrdom. The magistrate has a right to enforce what he thinks; and he who is conscious of the truth has a right to suffer. I am afraid there is no other way of ascertaining the truth but by persecution on the one hand and enduring it on the other.’ GOLDSMITH: ‘But how is a man to act, sir? Though firmly convinced of the truth of his doctrine, may he not think it wrong to expose himself to persecution? Has he a right to do so? Is it not, as it were, committing voluntary suicide?’ JOHNSON: ‘Sir, as to voluntary suicide, as you call it, there are twenty thousand men in an army who will go

¹ [Happily we have it now settled under the hands of the prelates, both of the Roman and Anglican Churches, that it is the natural and inalienable right of every parent to teach his child his own religious opinions, and that it is the duty of the State to allow all children attending elementary schools, to be instructed on the school premises in their father's religion, irrespective of the question whether such religion is generally believed to be true or false.—A. B.]

without scruple to be shot at, and mount a breach for fivepence a day.' GOLDSMITH: 'But have they a moral right to do this?' JOHNSON: 'Nay, sir, if you will not take the universal opinion of mankind, I have nothing to say. If mankind cannot defend their own way of thinking, I cannot defend it. Sir, if a man is in doubt whether it would be better for him to expose himself to martyrdom or not, he should not do it. He must be convinced that he has a delegation from heaven.' GOLDSMITH: 'I would consider whether there is the greater chance of good or evil upon the whole. If I see a man who has fallen into a well, I would wish to help him out; but if there is a greater probability that he shall pull me in, than that I shall pull him out, I would not attempt it. So were I to go to Turkey, I might wish to convert the Grand Signor to the Christian faith; but when I considered that I should probably be put to death without effectuating my purpose in any degree, I should keep myself quiet.' JOHNSON: 'Sir, you must consider that we have perfect and imperfect obligations. Perfect obligations, which are generally not to do something, are clear and positive; as, "thou shalt not kill." But charity, for instance, is not definable by limits. It is a duty to give to the poor; but no man can say how much another should give to the poor, or when a man has given too little to save his soul. In the same manner it is a duty to instruct the ignorant, and of consequence to convert infidels to Christianity; but no man in the common course of things is obliged to carry this to such a degree as to incur the danger of martyrdom, as no man is obliged to strip himself to the shirt in order to give charity. I have said that a man must be

persuaded that he has a particular delegation from heaven.' GOLDSMITH: 'How is this to be known? Our first reformers, who were burned for not believing bread and wine to be Christ——' JOHNSON (interrupting him): 'Sir, they were not burned for not believing bread and wine to be Christ, but for insulting those who did believe it. And, sir, when the first reformers began, they did not intend to be martyred: as many of them ran away as could.' BOSWELL: 'But, sir, there was your countryman, Elwal, who you told me challenged King George with his black-guards, and his red-guards.' JOHNSON: 'My countryman Elwal, sir, should have been put in the stocks—a proper pulpit for him; and he'd have had a numerous audience. A man who preaches in the stocks will always have hearers enough.' BOSWELL: 'But Elwal thought himself in the right.' JOHNSON: 'We are not providing for mad people; there are places for them in the neighbourhood' (meaning Moorfields). MAYO: 'But, sir, it is very hard that I should not be allowed to teach my children what I really believe to be truth?' JOHNSON: 'Why, sir, you might contrive to teach your children *extra scandalum*; but, sir, the magistrate, if he knows it, has a right to restrain you. Suppose you teach your children to be thieves?' MAYO: 'This is making a joke of the subject.' JOHNSON: 'Nay, sir, take it thus: that you teach them the community of goods, for which there are as many plausible arguments as for most erroneous doctrines. You teach them that all things at first were in common, and that no man had a right to anything but as he laid his hands upon it; and that this still is, or ought to be, the rule amongst mankind. Here, sir, you sap a great prin-

ciple in society—property. And don't you think the magistrate would have a right to prevent you? Or, suppose you should teach your children the notion of the Adamites, and they should run naked into the streets, would not the magistrate have a right to flog 'em into their doublets?' MAYO: 'I think the magistrate has no right to interfere till there is some overt act.' BOSWELL: 'So, sir, though he sees an enemy to the state charging a blunderbuss, he is not to interfere till it is fired off!' MAYO: 'He must be sure of its direction against the state.' JOHNSON: 'The magistrate is to judge of that. He has no right to restrain your thinking, because the evil centres in yourself. If a man were sitting at his table, and chopping off his fingers, the magistrate as guardian of the community, has no authority to restrain him, however he might do it from kindness as a parent. Though, indeed, upon more consideration, I think he may, as it is probable that he who is chopping off his own fingers, may soon proceed to chop off those of other people. If I think it right to steal Mr. Dilly's plate, I am a bad man; but he can say nothing to me. If I make an open declaration that I think so, he will keep me out of his house. If I put forth my hand, I shall be sent to Newgate. This is the gradation of thinking, preaching, and acting: if a man thinks erroneously, he may keep his thoughts to himself, and nobody will trouble him; if he preaches erroneous doctrine, society may expel him; if he acts in consequence of it, the law takes place and he is hanged.' MAYO: 'But, sir, ought not Christians to have liberty of conscience?' JOHNSON: 'I have already told you so, sir. You are coming back to where you were.' BOSWELL: 'Dr. Mayo is always

taking a return post-chaise, and going the stage over again. He has it at half price.' JOHNSON: 'Dr. Mayo, like other champions for unlimited toleration, has got a set of words.¹ Sir, it is no matter, politically, whether the magistrate be right or wrong. Suppose a club were to be formed, to drink confusion to King George the Third, and a happy restoration to Charles the Third, this would be very bad with respect to the State; but every member of that club must either conform to its rules, or be turned out of it. Old Baxter, I remember, maintains that the magistrate should "tolerate all things that are tolerable." This is no good definition of toleration upon any principle; but it shows that he thought some things were not tolerable.' TOPLADY: 'Sir, you have untwisted this difficult subject with great dexterity.'

During this argument Goldsmith sat in restless agitation, from a wish to get in and *shine*. Finding himself excluded, he had taken his hat to go away, but remained for some time with it in his hand, like a gamester, who at the close of a long night, lingers for a little while to see if he can have a favourable opening to finish with success. Once when he was beginning to speak he found himself overpowered by the loud voice of Johnson, who was at the opposite end of the table, and did not perceive Goldsmith's attempt. Thus disappointed of his wish to obtain the attention of the company, Goldsmith in a passion threw down his hat,

¹ Dr. Mayo's calm temper and steady perseverance rendered him an admirable subject for the exercise of Dr. Johnson's powerful abilities. He never flinched, but after reiterated blows remained seemingly unmoved as at the first. The scintillations of Johnson's genius flashed every time he was struck, without his receiving any injury. Hence he obtained the epithet of 'The Literary Anvil.'

looking angrily at Johnson, and exclaiming in a bitter tone, '*Take it.*' When Toplady was going to speak, Johnson uttered some sound, which led Goldsmith to think that he was beginning again, and taking the words from Toplady. Upon which he seized this opportunity of venting his own envy and spleen, under the pretext of supporting another person: 'Sir (said he to Johnson), the gentleman has heard you patiently for an hour: pray allow us now to hear him.' JOHNSON (sternly): 'Sir, I was not interrupting the gentleman. I was only giving him a signal of my attention. Sir, you are impertinent.' Goldsmith made no reply, but continued in the company for some time.

A gentleman present ventured to ask Dr. Johnson if there was not a material difference as to toleration of opinions which led to action, and opinions merely speculative; for instance, would it be wrong in the magistrate to tolerate those who preach against the doctrine of the Trinity? Johnson was highly offended, and said, 'I wonder, sir, how a gentleman of your piety can introduce this subject in a mixed company.' He told me afterwards that the impropriety was that perhaps some of the company might have talked on the subject in such terms as might have shocked him; or he might have been forced to appear in their eyes a narrow-minded man. The gentleman, with submissive deference, said, he had only hinted at the question from a desire to hear Dr. Johnson's opinion upon it. JOHNSON: 'Why then, sir, I think that permitting men to preach any opinion contrary to the doctrine of the Established Church, tends in a degree to lessen the authority of the Church, and consequently to lessen the influence of religion.'

‘It may be considered (said the gentleman), whether it would not be politic to tolerate in such a case.’

JOHNSON: ‘Sir, we have been talking of *right*: this is another question. I think it is *not* politic to tolerate in such a case.’

Though he did not think it fit that so awful a subject should be introduced into a mixed company, and therefore at this time waved the theological question; yet his own orthodox belief in the sacred mystery of the Trinity is evinced beyond doubt by the following passage in his private devotions: ‘O Lord, hear my prayer, for Jesus Christ’s sake; to whom with thee and the Holy Ghost, *three persons and one* God, be all honour and glory, world without end, Amen.’¹

BOSWELL: ‘Pray, Mr. Dilly, how does Dr. Leland’s *History of Ireland* sell?’ JOHNSON (bursting forth with a generous indignation): ‘The Irish are in a most unnatural state; for we see there the minority prevailing over the majority. There is no instance, even in the ten persecutions, of such severity as that which the Protestants of Ireland have exercised against the Catholics. Did we tell them we have conquered them, it would be above board: to punish them by confiscation and other penalties, as rebels, was monstrous injustice. King William was not their lawful sovereign: he had not been acknowledged by the Parliament of Ireland, when they appeared in arms against him.’

I here suggested something favourable of the Roman Catholics. TOPLADY: ‘Does not their invocation of saints suppose omnipresence in their

¹ *Prayers and Meditations*, p. 40.

saints?’ JOHNSON: ‘No, sir; it supposes only pluri-presence; and when spirits are divested of matter, it seems probable that they should see with more extent than when in an embodied state. There is, therefore, no approach to an invasion of any of the divine attributes in the invocation of saints. But I think it is will-worship and presumption. I see no command for it, and therefore think it safer not to practise it.’

He and Mr. Langton and I went together to the club, where we found Mr. Burke, Mr. Garrick, and some other members, and amongst them our friend Goldsmith, who sat silently brooding over Johnson’s reprimand to him after dinner. Johnson perceived this, and said aside to some of us: ‘I’ll make Goldsmith forgive me’; and then called to him in a loud voice: ‘Dr. Goldsmith,—something passed to-day where you and I dined; I ask your pardon.’ Goldsmith answered placidly, ‘It must be much from you, sir, that I take ill.’ And so at once the difference was over, and they were on as easy terms as ever, and Goldsmith rattled away as usual.

In our way to the club to-night, when I regretted that Goldsmith would, upon every occasion, endeavour to shine, by which he often exposed himself, Mr. Langton observed that he was not like Addison, who was content with the fame of his writings, and did not aim also at excellency in conversation, for which he found himself unfit; and that he said to a lady who complained of his having talked little in company, ‘Madam, I have but ninepence in ready money, but I can draw for a thousand pounds.’ I observed that Goldsmith had a great deal of gold in his cabinet, but not content with that, was always taking out his

purse. JOHNSON: 'Yes, sir, and that so often an empty purse!'

Goldsmith's incessant desire of being conspicuous in company was the occasion of his sometimes appearing to such disadvantage as one should hardly have supposed possible in a man of his genius. When his literary reputation had risen deservedly high, and his society was much courted, he became very jealous of the extraordinary attention which was everywhere paid to Johnson. One evening, in a circle of wits, he found fault with me for talking of Johnson as entitled to the honour of unquestionable superiority. 'Sir (said he), you are for making a monarchy of what should be a republic.'

He was still more mortified when talking in a company with fluent vivacity, and, as he flattered himself, to the admiration of all who were present; a German who sat next him, and perceived Johnson rolling himself, as if about to speak, suddenly stopped him, saying, 'Stay, stay,—Tdoctor Shonson is going to say something.' This was, no doubt, very provoking, especially to one so irritable as Goldsmith, who frequently mentioned it with strong expressions of indignation.

It may also be observed that Goldsmith was sometimes content to be treated with an easy familiarity, but upon occasions would be consequential and important. An instance of this occurred in a small particular. Johnson had a way of contracting the names of his friends: as Beauclerk, Beau; Boswell, Bozzy; Langton, Lanky; Murphy, Mur; Sheridan, Sherry. I remember one day when Tom Davies was telling that Dr. Johnson said, 'We are all in labour—'

for a name to *Goldy's* play,' Goldsmith seemed displeased that such a liberty should be taken with his name, and said, 'I have often desired him not to call me *Goldy*.' Tom was remarkably attentive to the most minute circumstance about Johnson. I recollect his telling me once, on my arrival in London: 'Sir, our great friend has made an improvement on his appellation of old Mr. Sheridan. He calls him now *Sherry derry*.'

TO THE REV. MR. BAGSHAW, AT BROMLEY¹

'SIR,—I return you my sincere thanks for your additions to my *Dictionary*; but the new edition has been published some time, and therefore I cannot now make use of them. Whether I shall ever revise it more, I know not. If many readers had been as judicious, as diligent, and as communicative as yourself, my work had been better. The world must at present take it as it is.—I am, sir, your most obliged and most humble servant,

SAM. JOHNSON.

'May 8, 1773.

On Sunday, May 8, I dined with Johnson at Mr. Langton's, with Dr. Beattie and some other company. He descanted on the subject of Literary Property. 'There seems (said he) to be in authors a stronger

¹ The Reverend Thomas Bagshaw, M.A., who died on November 20, 1787, in the seventy-seventh year of his age, chaplain of Bromley College, in Kent, and rector of Southfleet. He had resigned the cure of Bromley parish some time before his death. For this, and another letter from Dr. Johnson in 1784, to the same truly respectable man, I am indebted to Dr. John Loveday of the Commons, a son of the late learned and pious John Loveday, Esq., of Caversham in Berkshire, who obligingly transcribed them for me from the originals in his possession. This worthy gentleman, having retired from business, now lives in Warwickshire. The world has been lately obliged to him as the editor of the late Rev. Dr. Townson's excellent work, modestly entitled *A Discourse on the Evangelical History, from the Internment to the Ascension of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*; to which is prefixed a truly interesting and pleasing account of the author by the Reverend Mr. Ralph Churton.

right of property than that by occupancy; a metaphysical right, a right, as it were, of creation, which should from its nature be perpetual; but the consent of nations is against it; and indeed reason and the interests of learning are against it; for were it to be perpetual, no book, however useful, could be universally diffused amongst mankind, should the proprietor take it into his head to restrain its circulation. No book could have the advantage of being edited with notes, however necessary to its elucidation, should the proprietor perversely oppose it. For the general good of the world, therefore, whatever valuable work has once been created by an author, and issued out by him, should be understood as no longer in his power, but as belonging to the public; at the same time the author is entitled to an adequate reward. This he should have by an exclusive right to his work for a considerable number of years.'

He attacked Lord Monboddo's strange speculation on the primitive state of human nature: observing, 'Sir, it is all conjecture about a thing useless, even were it known to be true. Knowledge of all kinds is good. Conjecture as to things useful, is good; but conjecture as to what it would be useless to know, such as whether men went upon all-four, is very idle.'

On Monday, May 9, as I was to set out on my return to Scotland next morning, I was desirous to see as much of Dr. Johnson as I could. But I first called on Goldsmith to take leave of him. The jealousy and envy which, though possessed of many most amiable qualities, he frankly avowed, broke out violently at this interview. Upon another occasion, when Goldsmith confessed himself to be of an envious disposition,

I contended with Johnson that we ought not to be angry with him, he was so candid in owning it. 'Nay, sir (said Johnson), we must be angry that a man has such a superabundance of an odious quality, that he cannot keep it within his own breast, but it boils over.' In my opinion, however, Goldsmith had not more of it than other people have, but only talked of it freely.

He now seemed very angry that Johnson was going to be a traveller; said 'he would be a dead-weight for me to carry, and that I should never be able to lug him along through the Highlands and Hebrides.' Nor would he patiently allow me to enlarge upon Johnson's wonderful abilities; but exclaimed, 'Is he like Burke, who winds into a subject like a serpent?' 'But (said I), Johnson is the Hercules who strangled serpents in his cradle.'

I dined with Dr. Johnson at General Paoli's. He was obliged, by indisposition, to leave the company early; he appointed me, however, to meet him in the evening at Mr. (now Sir Robert) Chambers's in the Temple, where he accordingly came, though he continued to be very ill. Chambers, as is common on such occasions, prescribed various remedies to him. JOHNSON (fretted by pain): 'Prithee, don't tease me. Stay till I am well, and then you shall tell me how to cure myself.' He grew better, and talked with a noble enthusiasm of keeping up the representation of respectable families. His zeal on this subject was a circumstance in his character exceedingly remarkable, when it is considered that he himself had no pretensions to blood. I heard him once say, 'I have great merit in being zealous for subordination and the honours of birth; for I can hardly tell who was my grandfather.'

He maintained the dignity and propriety of male succession, in opposition to the opinion of one of our friends, who had that day employed Mr. Chambers to draw his will, devising his estate to his three sisters, in preference to a remote heir-male. Johnson called them ‘three *dowdies*,’ and said, with as high a spirit as the boldest Baron in the most perfect days of the feudal system, ‘An ancient estate should always go to males. It is mighty foolish to let a stranger have it because he marries your daughter, and takes your name. As for an estate newly acquired by trade, you may give it, if you will, to the dog *Towser*, and let him keep his *own* name.’

I have known him at times exceedingly diverted at what seemed to others a very small sport. He now laughed immoderately, without any reason that we could perceive, at our friend’s making his will; called him the *testator*, and added, ‘I daresay he thinks he has done a mighty thing. He won’t stay till he gets home to his seat in the country, to produce this wonderful deed: he’ll call up the landlord of the first inn on the road; and, after a suitable preface upon mortality and the uncertainty of life, will tell him that he should not delay making his will; and here, sir, will he say, is my will, which I have just made, with the assistance of one of the ablest lawyers in the kingdom; and he will read it to him (laughing all the time). He believes he has made this will; but he did not make it: you, Chambers, made it for him. I trust you have had more conscience than to make him say, “being of sound understanding”; ha, ha, ha! I hope he has left me a legacy. I’d have his will turned into verse like a ballad.’

In this playful manner did he run on, exulting in his own pleasantries, which certainly was not such as might be expected from the author of the *Rambler*, but which is here preserved that my readers may be acquainted even with the slightest occasional characteristics of so eminent a man.

Mr. Chambers did not by any means relish this jocularly upon a matter of which *pars magna fuit*, and seemed impatient till he got rid of us. Johnson could not stop his merriment, but continued it all the way till he got without the Temple Gate. He then burst into such a fit of laughter that he appeared to be almost in a convulsion; and, in order to support himself, laid hold of one of the posts at the side of the foot pavement, and sent forth peals so loud, that in the silence of the night his voice seemed to resound from Temple Bar to Fleetditch.¹

This most ludicrous exhibition of the awful, melancholy, and venerable Johnson, happened well to counteract the feelings of sadness which I used to experience when parting with him for a considerable time. I accompanied him to his door, where he gave me his blessing.

He records of himself this year, 'Between Easter and Whitsuntide, having always considered that time as propitious to study, I attempted to learn the Low Dutch language.'² It is to be observed that he here admits an opinion of the human mind being influenced by seasons, which he ridicules in his writings. His

¹ 'Dr. Johnson has more fun and comical humour and love of nonsense about him than almost anybody I ever saw.'—MADAME D'ARBLAY.

² *Prayers and Meditations*, p. 129.

progress, he says, was interrupted by a fever, 'which, by the imprudent use of a small print, left an inflammation in his useful eye.' We cannot but admire his spirit, when we know that amidst a complication of bodily and mental distress, he was still animated with the desire of intellectual improvement.¹ Various notes of his studies appear on different days in his manuscript diary of this year; such as:—'*Inchoavi lectionem Pentateuchi.—Finivi lectionem Conf. Fab. Burdonum.—Legi primum actum Troadum.—Legi Dissertationem Clerici postremam de Pent.—2 of Clark's Sermons.—L. Apollonii pugnam Betriciam.—L. centum versus Homeri.*' Let this serve as a specimen of what accessions of literature he was perpetually infusing into his mind, while he charged himself with idleness.

This year died Mrs. Salusbury (mother of Mrs. Thrale), a lady whom he appears to have esteemed much, and whose memory he honoured with an epitaph.²

In a letter from Edinburgh, dated the 29th of May, I pressed him to persevere in his resolution to make this year the projected visit to the Hebrides, of which he and I had talked for many years, and which I was confident would afford us much entertainment.

TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

'DEAR SIR,—When your letter came to me, I was so darkened by an inflammation in my eye that I could not for some time read it. I can now write without trouble, and can read large prints. My eye is gradually growing stronger: and

¹ [Not six months before his death, he wished me to teach him the Scale of Music:—'Dr. Burney, teach me at least the alphabet of your language.'—BURNLEY.]

² Mrs. Piozzi's *Anecdotes of Johnson*.

I hope will be able to take some delight in the survey of a Caledonian loch.

'Chambers is going a judge, with six thousand a year, to Bengal. He and I shall come down together as far as Newcastle, and thence I shall easily get to Edinburgh. Let me know the exact time when your courts intermit. I must conform a little to Chambers's occasions, and he must conform a little to mine. The time which you shall fix must be the common point to which we will come as near as we can. Except this eye, I am very well.

'Beattie is so caressed, and invited, and treated, and liked, and flattered by the great, that I can see nothing of him. I am in great hope that he will be well provided for, and then we will live upon him as the Marischal College, without pity or modesty.

'———¹ left the town without taking leave of me, and is gone in deep dudgeon to ———. Is not this very childish? Where is now my legacy?

'I hope your dear lady and her dear baby are both well. I shall see them too when I come; and I have that opinion of your choice, as to suspect that when I have seen Mrs. Boswell, I shall be less willing to go away.—I am, dear sir, your affectionate humble servant,

SAM. JOHNSON.

'*Johnson's Court, Fleet Street,*

'*July 5, 1773.*

'Write to me as soon as you can. Chambers is now at Oxford.'

I again wrote to him, informing him that the Court of Session rose on the twelfth of August, hoping to see him before that time, and expressing, perhaps in too extravagant terms, my admiration of him, and my expectation of pleasure from our intended tour.

TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

'DEAR SIR,—I shall set out from London on Friday the sixth of this month, and propose not to loiter much by the

¹ angton.

way. Which day I shall be at Edinburgh, I cannot exactly tell. I suppose I must drive to an inn, and send a porter to find you.

'I am afraid Beattie will not be at his college soon enough for us, and I shall be sorry to miss him; but there is no staying for the concurrence of all conveniences. We will do as well as we can.—I am, sir, your most humble servant,

'SAM. JOHNSON.

'August 3, 1773.'

TO THE SAME

'DEAR SIR,—Not being at Mr. Thrale's when your letter came, I had written the enclosed paper and sealed it; bringing it hither for a frank, I found your's. If anything could repress my ardour, it would be such a letter as yours. To disappoint a friend is displeasing; and he that forms expectations like yours, must be disappointed. Think only when you see me, that you see a man who loves you, and is proud and glad that you love him.—I am, sir, your most affectionate

'SAM. JOHNSON.

'August 3, 1773.'

TO THE SAME

'Newcastle, Aug. 11, 1773.

'DEAR SIR,—I came hither last night, and hope, but do not absolutely promise, to be in Edinburgh on Saturday. Beattie will not come so soon.—I am, sir, your most humble servant,

'SAM. JOHNSON.

'My compliments to your lady.'

TO THE SAME

'Mr. Johnson sends his compliments to Mr. Boswell, being just arrived at Boyd's.'

'Saturday night.'

His stay in Scotland was from the 18th of August, on which day he arrived, till the 22nd of November, when he set out on his return to London; and I believe ninety-four days were never passed by any man in a more vigorous exertion.

He came by the way of Berwick-upon-Tweed to Edinburgh, where he remained a few days, and then went by St. Andrews, Aberdeen, Inverness, and Fort Augustus, to the Hebrides, to visit which was the principal object he had in view. He visited the isles of Skye, Raasay, Coll, Mull, Inchkenneth, and Icolmkill. He travelled through Argyllshire by Inveraray, and from thence by Loch Lomond and Dumbarton to Glasgow, then by Loudoun to Auchinleck in Ayrshire, the seat of my family, and then by Hamilton, back to Edinburgh, where he again spent some time. He thus saw the four universities of Scotland, its three principal cities, and as much of the Highland and insular life as was sufficient for his philosophical contemplation. I had the pleasure of accompanying him during the whole of his journey. He was respectfully entertained by the great, the learned, and the elegant, wherever he went; nor was he less delighted with the hospitality which he experienced in humbler life.

His various adventures, and the force and vivacity of his mind, as exercised during his peregrination, upon innumerable topics, have been faithfully, and to the best of my abilities, displayed in my *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides*, to which, as the public has been pleased to honour it by a very extensive circulation, I beg leave to refer, as to a separate and remarkable portion of his life,¹ which may be there seen in

¹ [The author was not a small gainer by this extraordinary journey; for Dr. Johnson thus writes to Mrs. Thrale, Nov. 3, 1773: 'Boswell will praise my resolution and perseverance, and I shall in return celebrate his good humour and perpetual cheerfulness. He has better faculties than I had imagined; more justness of discernment, and more fecundity of images. It is very convenient to travel with him; for there is no house where he is not received with kindness and respect.' Let. 90, to Mrs. Thrale.—M.]

detail, and which exhibits as striking a view of his powers in conversation, as his works do of his excellence in writing. Nor can I deny to myself the very flattering gratification of inserting here the character which my friend Mr. Courtenay has been pleased to give of that work :

‘With Reynolds’ pencil, vivid, bold, and true,
 So fervent Boswell gives him to our view :
 In every trait we see his mind expand ;
 The master rises by the pupil’s hand ;
 We love the writer, praise his happy vein,
 Graced with the naïveté of the sage Montaigne.
 Hence not alone are brighter parts display’d,
 But e’en the specks of character portray’d :
 We *see* the Rambler with fastidious smile
 Mark the lone tree, and note the heath-clad isle ;
 But when th’ heroic tale of Flora’s¹ charms,
 Deck’d in a kilt, he wields a chieftain’s arms :
 The tuneful piper sounds a martial strain,
 And Samuel sings, “The King shall have his *ain*.”’

During his stay at Edinburgh, after his return from the Hebrides, he was at great pains to obtain information concerning Scotland ; and it will appear from his subsequent letters, that he was not less solicitous for intelligence on this subject after his return to London :

TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

‘DEAR SIR,—I came home last night, without any incommodity, danger, or weariness, and am ready to begin a new journey. I shall go to Oxford on Monday. I know Mrs.

¹ The celebrated Flora Macdonald. See Boswell’s *Tour*.

Boswell wished me well to go;¹ her wishes have not been disappointed. Mrs. Williams has received Sir A.'s² letter.

'Make my compliments to all those to whom my compliments may be welcome.

'Let the box³ be sent as soon as it can, and let me know when to expect it.

'Inquire, if you can, the order of the clans; Macdonald is first, Maclean is second; further I cannot go. Quicken Dr. Webster.⁴—I am, sir, yours affectionately, SAM. JOHNSON.

'Nov. 27, 1773.'

MR. BOSWELL TO DR. JOHNSON

'*Edinburgh, Dec. 2, 1773.*

'You shall have what information I can procure as to the order of the clans. A gentleman of the name of Grant tells me, that there is no settled order among them; and he says, that the Macdonalds were not placed upon the right of the army at Culloden; the Stuarts were. I shall, however, examine witnesses of every name that I can find here. Dr. Webster shall be quickened too. I like your little memorandums; they are symptoms of your being in earnest with your book of northern travels.

'Your box shall be sent next week by sea. You will find in it some pieces of the broom bush, which you saw growing

¹ In this he showed a very acute penetration. My wife paid him the most assiduous and respectful attention, while he was our guest: so that I wonder how he discovered her wishing for his departure. The truth is, that his irregular hours and uncouth habits, such as turning the candles with their heads downwards, when they did not burn bright enough, and letting the wax drop upon the carpet, could not but be disagreeable to a lady. Besides, she had not that high admiration of him which was felt by most of those who knew him; and what was very natural to a female mind, she thought he had too much influence over her husband. She once, in a little warmth, made, with more point than justice, this remark upon that subject: 'I have seen many a bear led by a man; but I never before saw a man led by a bear.'

² Sir Alexander Gordon, one of the Professors at Aberdeen.

³ This was a box containing a number of curious things which he had picked up in Scotland, particularly some horn spoons.

⁴ The Reverend Dr. Alexander Webster, one of the ministers of Edinburgh, a man of distinguished abilities, who had promised him information concerning the Highlands and Islands of Scotland.

on the old castle of Auchinleck. The wood has a curious appearance when sawn across. You may either have a little writing-standish made of it, or get it formed into boards for a treatise on witchcraft, by way of a suitable binding.'

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MR. BOSWELL TO DR. JOHNSON

'Edinburgh, Dec. 18, 1773.

'You promised me an inscription for a print to be taken from an historical picture of Mary Queen of Scots being forced to resign her crown, which Mr. Hamilton at Rome has painted for me. The two following have been sent to me :

'Maria Scotorum Regina meliori seculo digna, jus regium civibus seditiosis invita resignat.'

'Cives seditiosi Mariam Scotorum Reginam sese muneri abdicare invitam cogunt.'

'Be so good as to read the passage in Robertson, and see if you cannot give me a better inscription. I must have it both in Latin and English ; so if you should not give me another Latin one, you will at least choose the best of these two, and send a translation of it.'

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His humane forgiving disposition was put to a pretty strong test on his return to London, by a liberty which Mr. Thomas Davies had taken with him in his absence, which was, to publish two volumes entitled, *Miscellaneous and Fugitive Pieces*, which he advertised in the newspapers, 'By the author of the *Rambler*.' In this collection, several of Dr. Johnson's acknowledged writings, several of his anonymous performances, and some which he had written for others, were inserted ; but there were also some in which he had no concern whatever. He was at first very angry, as he had good reason to be. But, upon consideration of his poor friend's narrow circumstances, and that he had only a little profit in view and meant no harm, he

soon relented, and continued his kindness to him as formerly.

In the course of his self-examination with retrospect to this year, he seems to have been much dejected ; for he says, January 1, 1774, ‘This year has passed with so little improvement, that I doubt whether I have not rather impaired than increased my learning’;¹ and yet we have seen how he *read*, and we know how he *talked* during that period.

He was now seriously engaged in writing an account of our travels in the Hebrides, in consequence of which I had the pleasure of a more frequent correspondence with him.

TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

‘DEAR SIR,—My operations have been hindered by a cough ; at least I flatter myself that if my cough had not come, I should have been farther advanced. But I have had no intelligence from Dr. W—— [Webster], nor from the Excise Office, nor from you. No account of the little borough.² Nothing of the Erse language. I have yet heard nothing of my box.

‘You must make haste and gather me all you can, and do it quickly, or I will and shall do without it.

‘Make my compliments to Mrs. Boswell, and tell her that I do not love her the less for wishing me away. I gave her trouble enough, and shall be glad in recompense to give her any pleasure.

‘I would send some porter into the Hebrides if I knew which way it could be got to my kind friends there. Inquire, and let me know.

‘Make my compliments to all the Doctors of Edinburgh, and to all my friends from one end of Scotland to the other.

‘Write to me, and send me what intelligence you can : and

¹ *Prayers and Meditations*, p. 129.

² The ancient burgh of Prestwick, in Ayrshire.

if anything is too bulky for the post, let me have it by the carrier. I do not like trusting winds and waves.—I am, dear sir, yours most, etc.,

SAM. JOHNSON.

‘Jan. 29, 1774.’

TO THE SAME

‘DEAR SIR,—In a day or two after I had written the last discontented letter, I received my box, which was very welcome. But still I must entreat you to hasten Dr. Webster, and continue to pick up what you can that may be useful.

‘Mr. Oglethorpe was with me this morning, you know his errand. He was not unwelcome.

‘Tell Mrs. Boswell that my good intentions towards her still continue. I should be glad to do anything that would either benefit or please her.

‘Chambers is not yet gone, but so hurried, or so negligent, or so proud, that I rarely see him. I have indeed, for some weeks past, been very ill of a cold and cough, and have been at Mr. Thrale’s, that I might be taken care of. I am much better; *novæ redeunt in prælia vires*; but I am yet tender, and easily disordered. How happy it was that neither of us were ill in the Hebrides!

‘The question of Literary Property is this day before the Lords. Murphy drew up the Appellants’ case, that is, the plea against the perpetual right. I have not seen it, nor heard the decision. I would not have the right perpetual.

‘I will write to you as anything occurs, and do you send me something about my Scottish friends. I have very great kindness for them. Let me know likewise how fees come in, and when we are to see you.—I am, sir, yours affectionately,

‘SAM. JOHNSON.

‘London, Feb. 7, 1775.’

He at this time wrote the following letters to Mr. Steevens, his able associate in editing Shakespeare :

TO GEORGE STEEVENS, ESQ., IN HAMPSTEAD

‘SIR,—If I am asked when I have seen Mr. Steevens, you know what answer I must give; if I am asked when I shall see him, I wish you would tell me what to say.

'If you have Lesley's *History of Scotland*, or any other book about Scotland, except Boetius and Buchanan, it will be a kindness if you send them to, sir, your humble servant,

SAM. JOHNSON.

'Feb. 7, 1774.'

TO GEORGE STEEVENS, ESQ.

'SIR,—We are thinking to augment our club, and I am desirous of nominating you if you care to stand the ballot, and can attend on Friday nights at least twice in five weeks: less than this is too little, and rather more will be expected. Be pleased to let me know before Friday.—I am, sir, your most, etc.,

SAM. JOHNSON.

'Feb. 21, 1774.'

TO THE SAME

'SIR,—Last night you became a member of the club; if you call on me on Friday, I will introduce you. A gentleman, proposed after you, was rejected.

'I thank you for Neander, but wish he were not so fine. I will take care of him.—I am, sir, your humble servant,

SAM. JOHNSON.

'March 5, 1774.'

TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

'DEAR SIR,—'Dr. Webster's informations were much less exact and much less determinate than I expected: they are, indeed, much less positive than, if he can trust his own book¹ which he laid before me, he is able to give. But I believe it will always be found that he who calls much for information will advance his work but slowly.

'I am, however, obliged to you, dear sir, for your endeavours to help me, and hope, that between us something will sometime be done, if not on this, on some occasion.

'Chambers is either married, or almost married, to Miss

¹ A manuscript account drawn by Dr. Webster of all the parishes in Scotland, ascertaining their length, breadth, number of inhabitants, and distinguishing Protestants and Roman Catholics. This book had been transmitted to government, and Dr. Johnson saw a copy of it in Dr. Webster's possession.

Wilton, a girl of sixteen, exquisitely beautiful, whom he has with his lawyer's tongue persuaded to take her chance with him in the East.

'We have added to the club Charles Fox, Sir Charles Bunbury, Dr. Fordyce, and Mr. Steevens.

'Return my thanks to Dr. Webster. Tell Dr. Robertson I have not much to reply to his censure of my negligence; and tell Dr. Blair that since he has written hither what I said to him, we must now consider ourselves as even, forgive one another, and begin again. I care not how soon, for he is a very pleasing man. Pay my compliments to all my friends, and remind Lord Elibank of his promise to give me all his works.

'I hope Mrs. Boswell and little Miss are well. When shall I see them again? She is a sweet lady, only she was so glad to see me go that I have almost a mind to come again, that she may again have the same pleasure.

'Inquire if it be practicable to send a small present of a cask of porter to Dunvegan, Raasay, and Coll. I would not wish to be thought forgetful of civilities.—I am, sir, your humble servant,

SAM. JOHNSON.

'*March 5, 1774.*'

On the 5th of March I wrote to him, requesting his counsel whether I should this spring come to London. I stated to him on the one hand some pecuniary embarrassments, which, together with my wife's situation at that time, made me hesitate; and on the other, the pleasure and improvement which my annual visit to the metropolis always afforded me; and particularly mentioned a peculiar satisfaction which I experienced in celebrating the festival of Easter in St. Paul's cathedral; that to my fancy it appeared like going up to Jerusalem at the feast of the Passover; and that the strong devotion which I felt on that occasion diffused its influence on my mind through the rest of the year.

TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

[Not dated, but written about
the 15th of March.]

‘DEAR SIR,—I am ashamed to think that since I received your letter I have passed so many days without answering it.

‘I think there is no great difficulty in resolving your doubts. The reasons for which you are inclined to visit London are, I think, not of sufficient strength to answer the objections. That you should delight to come once a year to the fountain of intelligence and pleasure is very natural ; but both information and pleasure must be regulated by propriety. Pleasure, which cannot be obtained but by unseasonable or unsuitable expense, must always end in pain ; and pleasure, which must be enjoyed at the expense of another’s pain, can never be such as a worthy mind can fully delight in.

‘What improvement you might gain by coming to London you may easily supply, or easily compensate, by enjoining yourself some particular study at home, or opening some new avenue to information. Edinburgh is not yet exhausted ; and I am sure you will find no pleasure here which can deserve either that you should anticipate any part of your future fortune, or that you should condemn yourself and your lady to penurious frugality for the rest of the year.

‘I need not tell you what regard you owe to Mrs. Boswell’s entreaties ; or how much you ought to study the happiness of her who studies yours with so much diligence, and of whose kindness you enjoy such good effects. Life cannot subsist in society but by reciprocal concessions. She permitted you to ramble last year, you must permit her now to keep you at home.

‘Your last reason is so serious that I am unwilling to oppose it. Yet you must remember that your image of worshipping once a year in a certain place, in imitation of the Jews, is but a comparison ; and *simile non est idem* ; if the annual resort to Jerusalem was a duty to the Jews, it was a duty because it was commanded ; and you have no such command, therefore no such duty. It may be dangerous to receive too readily, and indulge too fondly, opinions from

which, perhaps, no pious mind is wholly disengaged, of local sanctity and local devotion. You know what strange effects they have produced over a great part of the Christian world. I am now writing, and you, when you read this, are reading under the Eye of Omnipresence.

‘To what degree fancy is to be admitted into religious offices, it would require much deliberation to determine. I am far from intending totally to exclude it. Fancy is a faculty bestowed by our Creator, and it is reasonable that all His gifts should be used to His glory, that all our faculties should co-operate in His worship; but they are to co-operate according to the will of him that gave them, according to the order which His wisdom has established. As ceremonies, prudential or convenient, are less obligatory than positive ordinances, as bodily worship is only the token to others or ourselves of mental adoration, so Fancy is always to act in subordination to Reason. We may take Fancy for a companion, but must follow Reason as our guide. We may allow Fancy to suggest certain ideas in certain places; but Reason must always be heard, when she tells us that those ideas and those places have no natural or necessary relation. When we enter a church we habitually recall to mind the duty of adoration, but we must not omit adoration for want of a temple; because we know, and ought to remember, that the universal Lord is everywhere present; and that, therefore, to come to Iona, or to Jerusalem, though it may be useful, cannot be necessary.

‘Thus I have answered your letter, and have not answered it negligently. I love you too well to be careless when you are serious.

‘I think I shall be very diligent next week about our travels, which I have too long neglected.—I am, dear sir, Your most, etc.,

SAM. JOHNSON.

‘Compliments to Madam and Miss.’

TO THE SAME

‘DEAR SIR,—The lady who delivers this has a lawsuit, in which she desires to make use of your skill and eloquence, and she seems to think that she shall have something more of

both for a recommendation from me ; which, though I know how little you want any external incitement to your duty, I could not refuse her, because I know that at least it will not hurt her to tell you that I wish her well.—I am, sir, your most humble servant,

SAM. JOHNSON.

‘May 10, 1774.’

MR. BOSWELL TO DR. JOHNSON

‘Edinburgh, May 12, 1774.

‘Lord Hailes has begged of me to offer you his best respects, and to transmit to you specimens of *Annals of Scotland, from the Accession of Malcolm Kenmore to the Death of James V.*, in drawing up which, his Lordship has been engaged for some time. His Lordship writes to me thus: “If I could procure Dr. Johnson’s criticisms, they would be of great use to me in the prosecution of my work, as they would be judicious and true. I have no right to ask that favour of him. If you could it would highly oblige me.”

‘Dr. Blair requests you may be assured that he did not write to London what you said to him, and that neither by word nor letter has he made the least complaint of you ; but, on the contrary, has a high respect for you, and loves you much more since he saw you in Scotland. It would both divert and please you to see his eagerness about this matter.’

TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

‘Streatham, June 12, 1774.

‘DEAR SIR,—Yesterday I put the first sheets of the *Journey to the Hebrides* to the press. I have endeavoured to do you some justice in the first paragraph. It will be one volume in octavo, not thick.

‘It will be proper to make some presents in Scotland. You shall tell me to whom I shall give ; and I have stipulated twenty-five for you to give in your own name. Some will take the present better from me, others better from you. In this, you who are to live in the place ought to direct. Consider it. Whatever you can get for my purpose send me ; and make my compliments to your lady and both the young ones. I am, sir, yours, etc.,

SAM. JOHNSON.’

MR. BOSWELL TO DR. JOHNSON

‘*Edinburgh, June 24, 1774.*

‘You do not acknowledge the receipt of the various packets which I have sent you. Neither can I prevail with you to *answer* my letters, though you honour me with *returns*. You have said nothing to me about poor Goldsmith,¹ nothing about Langton.

‘I have received for you, from the Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge in Scotland, the following Erse books: *The New Testament*; *Baxter’s Call*; *The Confession of Faith of the Assembly of Divines at Westminster*; *The Mother’s Catechism*; *A Gaelic and English Vocabulary.*’²

TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

‘DEAR SIR,—I wish you could have looked over my book before the printer, but it could not easily be. I suspect some mistakes; but as I deal, perhaps, more in notions than in facts, the matter is not great, and the second edition will be mended, if any such there be. The press will go on slowly for a time, because I am going into Wales to-morrow.

‘I should be very sorry if I appeared to treat such a character as Lord Hailes otherwise than with high respect. I return the sheets,³ to which I have done what mischief I could; and finding it so little, thought not much of sending them. The narrative is clear, lively, and short.

‘I have done worse to Lord Hailes than by neglecting his sheets: I have run him in debt. Dr. Horne, the President of Magdalen College in Oxford, wrote to me about three months ago, that he purposed to reprint Walton’s *Lives*, and desired me to contribute to the work; my answer was, that Lord Hailes intended the same publication; and Dr. Horne has resigned it to him. His Lordship must now think seriously about it.

¹ Dr. Goldsmith died April 4 this year.

² These books Dr. Johnson presented to the Bodleian Library.

³ On the cover enclosing them Dr. Johnson wrote, ‘If my delay has given any reason for supposing that I have not a very deep sense of the honour done me by asking my judgment, I am very sorry.’

'Of poor dear Dr. Goldsmith there is little to be told more than the papers have made public. He died of a fever, made, I am afraid, more violent by uneasiness of mind. His debts began to be heavy, and all his resources were exhausted. Sir Joshua is of opinion that he owed not less than two thousand pounds. Was ever poet so trusted before?

'You may, if you please, put the inscription thus: "*Maria Scotorum Regina nata 15—, a suis in exilium acta 15—, ab hospitâ neci data 15—.*" You must find the years.

'Of your second daughter you certainly gave the account yourself, though you have forgotten it. While Mrs. Boswell is well, never doubt of a boy. Mrs. Thrale brought, I think, five girls running, but while I was with you she had a boy.

'I am obliged to you for all your pamphlets, and of the last I hope to make some use. I made some of the former.—I am, dear sir, your most affectionate servant, SAM. JOHNSON.

'July 4, 1774.

'My compliments to all the three ladies.'

TO BENNET LANGTON, ESQ., AT LANGTON, NEAR SPILSBY,
LINCOLNSHIRE

'DEAR SIR,—You have reason to reproach me that I have left your last letter so long unanswered, but I had nothing particular to say. Chambers, you find, is gone far, and poor Goldsmith is gone much farther. He died of a fever, exasperated, as I believe, by the fear of distress. He had raised money, and squandered it by every artifice of acquisition and folly of expense. But let not his frailties be remembered: he was a very great man.

'I have just begun to print my *Journey to the Hebrides*, and am leaving the press to take another journey into Wales, whither Mr. Thrale is going, to take possession of, at least, five hundred a year, fallen to his lady. All at Streatham, that are alive, are well.

'I have never recovered from the last dreadful illness, but flatter myself that I grow gradually better: much, however, yet remains to mend. *Κύριε ἐλέησον.*

'If you have the Latin version of *Busy, curious, thirsty fly*, be so kind as to transcribe and send it; but you need not be

in haste, for I shall be I know not where for at least five weeks. I wrote the following tetrastic on poor Goldsmith:

Τὸν τάφον εἰσordaas τὸν Ὀλιβαρλοιο, κονίην
 "Αφροσι μὴ σεμνήν, Ξεῖνε, πόδεσσι πάτει·
 Οἷσι μέμηλε φύσις, μέτρων χάρις, ἔργα παλαιῶν,
 Κλαίετε ποιητὴν, ἱστορικὸν, φυσικόν.

'Please to make my most respectful compliments to all the ladies, and remember me to young George and his sisters. I reckon George begins to show a pair of heels.

'Do not be sullen now, but let me find a letter when I come back.—I am, dear sir, your affectionate, humble servant,

'SAM. JOHNSON.

'July 5, 1774.'

TO MR. ROBERT LEVET

'Llewenny, in Denbighshire,
 August 16, 1774.

'DEAR SIR,—Mr. Thrale's affairs have kept him here a great while, nor do I know exactly when we shall come hence. I have sent you a bill upon Mr. Strahan.

'I have made nothing of the ipecacuanha, but have taken abundance of pills, and hope that they have done me good.

'Wales, so far as I have yet seen of it, is a very beautiful and rich country, all enclosed and planted. Denbigh is not a mean town. Make my compliments to all my friends, and tell Frank I hope he remembers my advice. When his money is out let him have more.—I am, sir, your humble servant,

'SAM. JOHNSON.'

MR. BOSWELL TO DR. JOHNSON

'Edinburgh, Aug. 30, 1774.

'You have given me an inscription for a portrait of Mary Queen of Scots, in which you, in a short and striking manner, point out her hard fate. But you will be pleased to keep in mind that my picture is a representation of a particular scene in her history; her being forced to resign her crown, while she was imprisoned in the castle of Lochleven. I must, therefore, beg that you will be kind enough to give me an inscrip-

tion suited to that particular scene ; or determine which of the two formerly transmitted to you is the best ; and at any rate, favour me with an English translation. It will be doubly kind if you comply with my request speedily.

‘Your critical notes on the specimen of Lord Hailes’s *Annals of Scotland* are excellent. I agreed with you on every one of them. He himself objected only to the alteration of *free* to *brave*, in the passage where he says that Edward “departed with the glory due to the conqueror of a free people.” He says to call the Scots brave would only add to the glory of their conqueror. You will make allowance for the national zeal of our annalist. I now send a few more leaves of the *Annals*, which I hope you will peruse, and return with observations, as you did upon the former occasion. Lord Hailes writes to me thus : “Mr. Boswell will be pleased to express the grateful sense which Sir David Dalrymple has of Dr. Johnson’s attention to his little specimen. The further specimen will show that

“Even in an *Edward* he can see desert.”

‘It gives me much pleasure to hear that a republication of Isaac Walton’s *Lives* is intended. You have been in a mistake in thinking that Lord Hailes had it in view. I remember one morning, while he sat with you in my house, he said that there should be a new edition of Walton’s *Lives* ; and you said that “they should be be-noted a little.” This was all that passed on that subject. You must, therefore, inform Dr. Horne, that he may resume his plan. I enclose a note concerning it ; and if Dr. Horne will write to me, all the attention that I can give shall be cheerfully bestowed upon what I think a pious work, the preservation and elucidation of Walton, by whose writings I have been most pleasingly edified.’

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MR. BOSWELL TO DR. JOHNSON

‘*Edinburgh, Sept. 16, 1774.*

‘WALES has probably detained you longer than I supposed. You will have become quite a mountaineer, by visiting Scot-

land one year and Wales another. You must next go to Switzerland. Cambria will complain if you do not honour her also with some remarks. And I find *concessere columnæ*, the booksellers expect another book. I am impatient to see your *Tour to Scotland and the Hebrides*. Might you not send me a copy by the post as soon as it is printed off?

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TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

‘DEAR SIR,—Yesterday I returned from my Welsh journey. I was sorry to leave my book suspended so long; but having an opportunity of seeing, with so much convenience, a new part of the island, I could not reject it. I have been in five of the six counties of North Wales; and have seen St. Asaph and Bangor, the two seats of their Bishops: have been upon Penmaenmawr and Snowdon, and passed over into Anglesea. But Wales is so little different from England that it offers nothing to the speculation of the traveller.

‘When I came home I found several of your papers, with some pages of Lord Hailes’s *Annals*, which I will consider. I am in haste to give you some account of myself, lest you should suspect me of negligence in the pressing business which I find recommended to my care, and which I knew nothing of till now, when all care is vain.¹

‘In the distribution of my books I purpose to follow your advice, adding such as shall occur to me. I am not pleased with your notes of remembrance added to your names, for I hope I shall not easily forget them.

‘I have received four Erse books, without any direction, and suspect that they are intended for the Oxford Library. If that is the intention, I think it will be proper to add the metrical Psalms, and whatever else is printed in Erse, that the present may be complete. The donor’s name should be told.

‘I wish you could have read the book before it was printed, but our distance does not easily permit it.

¹ I had written to him to request his interposition in behalf of a convict, who I thought was very unjustly condemned.

‘I am sorry Lord Hailes does not intend to publish Walton ; I am afraid it will not be done so well, if it be done at all.

‘I purpose now to drive the book forward. Make my compliments to Mrs. Boswell, and let me hear often from you.—I am, dear sir, your affectionate humble servant,

‘SAM. JOHNSON.

‘*London, Octob. 1, 1774.*’

This tour to Wales, which was made in company with Mr. and Mrs. Thrale, though it no doubt contributed to his health and amusement, did not give an occasion to such a discursive exercise of his mind as our tour to the Hebrides. I do not find that he kept any journal or notes of what he saw there. All that I heard him say of it was that, ‘instead of bleak and barren mountains, there were green and fertile ones ; and that one of the castles in Wales would contain all the castles that he had seen in Scotland.’

Parliament having been dissolved, and his friend Mr. Thrale, who was a steady supporter of Government, having again to encounter the storm of a contested election, he wrote a short political pamphlet, entitled *The Patriot*, addressed to the electors of Great Britain ; a title which, to factious men, who consider a patriot only as an opposer of the measures of Government, will appear strangely misapplied. It was, however, written with energetic vivacity ; and, except those passages in which it endeavours to vindicate the glaring outrage of the House of Commons in the case of the Middlesex election, and to justify the attempt to reduce our fellow-subjects in America to unconditional submission, it contained an admirable display of the properties of a real patriot, in the original and genuine sense—a sincere, steady, rational, and un-

biased friend to the interests and prosperity of his King and country. It must be acknowledged, however, that both in this and his two former pamphlets, there was, amidst many powerful arguments, not only a considerable portion of sophistry, but a contemptuous ridicule of his opponents, which was very provoking.

TO MR. PERKINS¹

'SIR,—You may do me a very great favour. Mrs. Williams, a gentlewoman whom you have seen at Mr. Thrale's, is a petitioner for Mr. Hetherington's charity : petitions are this day issued at Christ's Hospital.

'I am a bad manager of business in a crowd ; and if I should send a mean man, he may be put away without his errand. I must therefore entreat that you will go, and ask for a petition for Anna Williams, whose paper of inquiries was delivered with answers at the counting-house of the hospital on Thursday the 20th. My servant will attend you thither, and bring the petition home when you have it.

'The petition which they are to give us is a form which they deliver to every petitioner, and which the petitioner is afterwards to fill up, and return to them again. This we must have, or we cannot proceed according to their directions. You need, I believe, only ask for a petition ; if they inquire for whom you ask, you can tell them.

'I beg pardon for giving you this trouble ; but it is a matter of great importance.—I am, sir, your most humble servant,

'SAM. JOHNSON.

'October 25, 1774.'

¹ Mr. Perkins was for a number of years the worthy superintendent of Mr. Thrale's great brewery, and after his death became one of the proprietors of it ; and now resides in Mr. Thrale's house in Southwark, which was the scene of so many literary meetings, and in which he continues the liberal hospitality for which it was eminent. Dr. Johnson esteemed him much. He hung up in the counting-house a fine proof of the admirable mezzotinto of Dr. Johnson, by Doughty ; and when Mrs. Thrale asked him somewhat flippantly, 'Why do you put him up in the counting-house?' he answered, 'Because, madam, I wish to have one wise man there.' 'Sir (said Johnson), I thank you.' It is a very handsome compliment, and I believe you speak sincerely.'

TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

‘DEAR SIR,—There has appeared lately in the papers an account of a boat upset between Mull and Ulva, in which many passengers were lost, and among them Maclean of Coll. We, you know, were once drowned;¹ I hope, therefore, that the story is either wantonly or erroneously told. Pray satisfy me by the next post.

‘I have printed two hundred and forty pages. I am able to do nothing much worth doing to dear Lord Hailes’s book. I will, however, send back the sheets; and hope, by degrees, to answer all your reasonable expectations.

‘Mr. Thrale has happily surmounted a very violent and acrimonious opposition; but all joys have their abatement: Mrs. Thrale has fallen from her horse, and hurt herself very much. The rest of our friends, I believe, are well. My compliments to Mrs. Boswell.—I am, sir, your most affectionate servant,

SAM. JOHNSON.

‘London, October 27, 1774.’

This letter, which shows his tender concern for an amiable young gentleman to whom he had been very much obliged in the Hebrides, I have inserted according to its date, though before receiving it I had informed him of the melancholy event that the young Laird of Coll was unfortunately drowned.

TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

‘DEAR SIR,—Last night I corrected the last page of our *Journey to the Hebrides*. The printer has detained it all this time, for I had, before I went into Wales, written all except two sheets. *The Patriot* was called for by my political friends on Friday, was written on Saturday, and I have heard little of it. So vague are conjectures at a distance.² As soon

¹ In the newspapers.

² Alluding to a passage in a letter of mine, where, speaking of his *Journey to the Hebrides*, I say, ‘But has not *The Patriot* been an interruption, by the time taken to write it, and the time luxuriously spent in listening to its applauses?’

as I can, I will take care that copies be sent to you, for I would wish that they might be given before they are bought; but I am afraid that Mr. Strahan will send to you and to the book-sellers at the same time. Trade is as diligent as courtesy. I have mentioned all that you recommended. Pray make my compliments to Mrs. Boswell and the younglings. The club has, I think, not yet met.

‘Tell me, and tell me honestly, what you think, and what others say, of our travels. Shall we touch the Continent?’¹—
I am, dear sir, your most humble servant,

‘SAM. JOHNSON.

‘Nov. 26, 1774.’

In his manuscript diary of this year there is the following entry :

‘Nov. 27. Advent Sunday. I considered that this day, being the beginning of the ecclesiastical year, was a proper time for a new course of life. I began to read the Greek Testament regularly at 160 verses every Sunday. This day I began the Acts.

‘In this week I read Virgil’s Pastorals. I learned to repeat the Pollio and Gallus. I read carelessly the first Georgic.’

Such evidences of his unceasing ardour, both for ‘divine and human lore,’ when advanced into his sixty-fifth year, and notwithstanding his many disturbances from disease, must make us at once honour his spirit, and lament that it should be so grievously clogged by its material tegument. It is remarkable that he was very fond of the precision which calculation produces. Thus we find in one of his manuscript diaries, ‘12 pages in 4to Gr. Test. and 30 pages in Beza’s folio, comprise the whole in 40 days.’

¹ We had projected a voyage together up the Baltic, and talked of visiting some of the more northern regions.

DR. JOHNSON TO JOHN HOOLE, ESQ.

'DEAR SIR,—I have returned your play,¹ which you will find underscored with red where there was a word which I did not like. The red will be washed off with a little water.

'The plot is so well framed, the intricacy so artful, and the disentanglement so easy, the suspense so affecting, and the passionate parts so properly interposed, that I have no doubt of its success.—I am, sir, your most humble servant,

'SAM. JOHNSON.

'December 19, 1774.'

The first effort of his pen in 1775 was *Proposals for publishing the Works of Mrs. Charlotte Lennox*, in three volumes quarto. In his diary, January 2, I find this entry: 'Wrote *Charlotte's Proposals*. But, indeed, the internal evidence would have been quite sufficient. Her claim to the favour of the public was thus enforced:

'Most of the pieces, as they appeared singly, have been read with approbation, perhaps above their merits, but of no great advantage to the writer. She hopes, therefore, that she shall not be considered as too indulgent to vanity, or too studious of interest, if from that labour which has hitherto been chiefly gainful to others, she endeavours to obtain at last some profit to herself and her children. She cannot decently enforce her claim by the praise of her own performances; nor can she suppose that, by the most artful and laboured address, any additional notice could be procured to a publication of which Her Majesty has condescended to be the Patroness.'

He this year also wrote the Preface to Baretti's *Easy Lessons in Italian and English*.

¹ *Cleonicæ*

TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

‘DEAR SIR,—You never did ask for a book by the post till now, and I did not think on it. You see now it is done. I sent one to the King, and I hear he likes it.

‘I shall send a parcel into Scotland for presents, and intend to give to many of my friends. In your catalogue you left out Lord Auchinleck.

‘Let me know, as fast as you read it, how you like it; and let me know if any mistake is committed, or anything important left out. I wish you could have seen the sheets. My compliments to Mrs. Boswell, and to Veronica, and to all my friends.—I am, sir, your most humble servant,

‘SAM. JOHNSON.

‘January 14, 1775.’

MR. BOSWELL TO DR. JOHNSON

‘Edinburgh, Jan. 19, 1775.

‘BE pleased to accept of my best thanks for your *Journey to the Hebrides*, which came to me by last night’s post. I did really ask the favour twice; but you have been even with me by granting it so speedily. *Bis dat qui cito dat*. Though ill of a bad cold, you kept me up the greatest part of the last night: for I did not stop till I had read every word of your book. I looked back to our first talking of a visit to the Hebrides, which was many years ago, when sitting by ourselves in the Mitre tavern in London, I think about *witching time o’ night*: and then exulted in contemplating our scheme fulfilled, and a *monumentum perenne* of it erected by your superior abilities. I shall only say that your book has afforded me a high gratification. I shall afterwards give you my thoughts on particular passages. In the meantime I hasten to tell you of your having mistaken two names, which you will correct in London, as I shall do here, that the gentlemen who deserve the valuable compliments which you have paid them may enjoy their honours. In page 106, for *Gordon* read *Murchison*; and in page 357, for *Macleam* read *Macleod*.

‘But I am now to apply to you for immediate aid in my

profession, which you have never refused to grant when I requested it. I enclose you a petition for Dr. Memis, a physician at Aberdeen, in which Sir John Dalrymple has exerted his talents, and which I am to answer as counsel for the managers of the Royal Infirmary in that city. Mr. Jop, the Provost, who delivered to you your freedom, is one of my clients, and, *as a citizen of Aberdeen*, you will support him.

'The fact is shortly this. In a translation of the charter of the Infirmary from Latin into English, made under the authority of the managers, the same phrase in the original is in one place rendered *Physician*, but when applied to Dr. Memis is rendered *Doctor of Medicine*. Dr. Memis complained of this before the translation was printed, but was not indulged with having it altered; and he has brought an action for damages, on account of supposed injury, as if the designation given to him was an inferior one, tending to make it be supposed he is *not a Physician*, and, consequently to hurt his practice. My father has dismissed the action as groundless, and now he has appealed to the whole Court.'¹

TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

'DEAR SIR,—I long to hear how you like the book; it is, I think, much liked here. But Macpherson is very furious: can you give me any more intelligence about him or his Fingal? Do what you can, and do it quickly. Is Lord Hailes on our side?

'Pray let me know what I owed you when I left you, that I may send it to you.

'I am going to write about the Americans. If you have picked up any hints among your lawyers, who are great masters of the law of nations, or if your own mind suggest anything, let me know. But mum—it is a secret.

'I will send you parcel of books as soon as I can, but I cannot do as I wish. However, you find everything mentioned in the book which you recommended.

¹ In the Court of Session of Scotland an action is first tried by one of the Judges, who is called the Lord Ordinary; and if either party is dissatisfied he may appeal to the whole Court, consisting of fifteen, the Lord President and fourteen other Judges, who have both in and out of Court the title of Lords, from the name of their estates; as, Lord Auchinleck, Lord Monboddo, etc.

'Langton is here; we are all that ever we were. He is a worthy fellow, without malice, though not without resentment.

'Poor Beauclerk is so ill that his life is thought to be in danger. Lady Di nurses him with very great assiduity.

'Reynolds has taken too much of strong liquor,¹ and seems to delight in his new character.

'This is all the news that I have; but as you love verses I will send you a few which I made upon Inchkenneth;² but remember the condition, you shall not show them, except to Lord Hailes, whom I love better than any man whom I know so little. If he asks you to transcribe them for him you may do it, but I think he must promise not to let them be copied again, nor to show them as mine.

'I have at last sent back Lord Hailes's sheets. I never think about returning them, because I alter nothing. You will see that I might as well have kept them. However, I am ashamed of my delay; and if I have the honour of receiving any more, promise punctually to return them by the next post. Make my compliments to dear Mrs. Boswell, and to Miss Veronica.—I am, dear sir, yours most faithfully,

'SAM. JOHNSON.³

'Jan. 1, 1775.'

¹ It should be recollected that this fanciful description of his friend was given by Johnson after he himself had become a water-drinker.

² See them in *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides*, 3rd edit., p. 337.

³ He now sent me a Latin inscription for my historical picture, Mary, Queen of Scots, and afterwards favoured me with an English translation. Mr. Alderman Boydell, that eminent Patron of the Arts, has subjoined them to the engraving from my picture:

' *Maria Scotorum Regina,
Hominum seditiosorum
Contumeliis lassata,
Minis territa, clamoribus victa,
Libello, per quem
Regno cedit,
Lacrimans trepidansque
Nomen apponit.*

' Mary, Queen of Scots,
Harassed, terrified, and overpowered,
By the insults, menaces,
And clamours
Of her rebellious subjects,
Sets her hand,
With tears and confusion,
To a resignation of the kingdom.'

MR. BOSWELL TO DR. JOHNSON

'Edinburgh, Jan. 27, 1775.

'You rate our lawyers here too high when you call them great masters of the law of nations.

'As for myself, I am ashamed to say I have read little and thought little on the subject of America. I will be much obliged to you if you will direct me where I shall find the best information of what is to be said on both sides. It is a subject vast in its present extent and future consequences. The imperfect hints which now float in my mind tend rather to the formation of an opinion that our government has been precipitant and severe in the resolutions taken against the Bostonians. Well do you know that I have no kindness for that race. But nations, or bodies of men, should, as well as individuals, have a fair trial, and not be condemned on character alone. Have we not express contracts with our colonies, which afford a more certain foundation of judgment than general political speculations on the mutual rights of States and their provinces or colonies? Pray let me know immediately what to read, and I shall diligently endeavour to gather for you anything that I can find. Is Burke's speech on American taxation published by himself? Is it authentic? I remember to have heard you say that you had never considered East India affairs: though, surely, they are of much importance to Great Britain. Under the recollection of this I shelter myself from the reproach of ignorance about the Americans. If you write upon the subject I shall certainly understand it. But, since you seem to expect that I should know something of it, without your instruction, and that my own mind should suggest something, I trust you will put me in the way.

'What does Becket mean by the *Originals* of Fingal and other poems of Ossian, which he advertises to have lain in his shop?'

TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

‘DEAR SIR,—You sent me a case to consider, in which I have no facts but what are against us, nor any principles on which to reason. It is in vain to try to write thus without materials. The fact seems to be against you; at least I cannot know nor say anything to the contrary. I am glad that you like the book so well. I hear no more of Macpherson I shall long to know what Lord Hailes says of it. Lend it him privately. I shall send the parcel as soon as I can. Make my compliments to Mrs. Boswell.—I am, sir, etc.,

‘SAM. JOHNSON.

‘*Jan. 28, 1775.*’

MR. BOSWELL TO DR. JOHNSON

‘*Edinburgh, Feb. 2, 1775.*

‘As to Macpherson, I am anxious to have from yourself a full and pointed account of what has passed between you and him. It is confidently told here that before your book came out he sent to you, to let you know that he understood you meant to deny the authenticity of Ossian’s poems; that the originals were in his possession; that you might have inspection of them, and might take the evidence of people skilled in the Erse language; and that he hoped, after this fair offer, you would not be so uncandid as to assert that he had refused reasonable proof. That you paid no regard to his message, but published your strong attack upon him; and then he wrote a letter to you, in such terms as he thought suited to one who had not acted as a man of veracity. You may believe it gives me pain to hear your conduct represented as unfavourable, while I can only deny what is said, on the ground that your character refutes it, without having any information to oppose. Let me, I beg it of you, be furnished with a sufficient answer to any calumny upon this occasion.

‘Lord Hailes writes to me (for we correspond more than we talk together), “As to Fingal, I see a controversy arising, and purpose to keep out of its way. There is no doubt that I might mention some circumstances; but I do not choose to

commit them to paper.”¹ What his opinion is, I do not know. He says, “I am singularly obliged to Dr. Johnson for his accurate and useful criticisms. Had he given some strictures on the general plan of the work, it would have added much to his favours.” He is charmed with your verses on Inchkenneth, says they are very elegant, but bids me tell you he doubts whether

“Legitimas faciunt pectora pura preces,”

be according to the rubric: but that is your concern; for, you know he is a Presbyterian.²

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TO DR. LAWRENCE²

‘Feb. 7, 1775.

‘SIR,—One of the Scotch physicians is now prosecuting a corporation that in some public instrument have styled him *Doctor of Medicine* instead of *Physician*. Boswell desires, being advocate for the corporation, to know whether *Doctor of Medicine* is not a legitimate title, and whether it may be considered as a disadvantageous distinction. I am to write to-night; be pleased to tell me.—I am, sir, your most, etc.,

‘SAM. JOHNSON.’

TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

‘MY DEAR BOSWELL,—I am surprised that, knowing as you do the disposition of your countrymen to tell lies in favour of each other,³ you can be at all affected by any reports that circulate among them. Macpherson never in his life offered me a sight of any original, or of any evidence of any kind; but thought only of intimidating me by noise and threats, till

¹ His Lordship, notwithstanding his resolution, did commit his sentiments to paper, and in one of his notes affixed to his collection of Old Scottish Poetry, he says, that ‘to doubt the authenticity of those poems is a refinement in scepticism indeed.’—I. B.]

² The learned and worthy Dr. Lawrence, whom Dr. Johnson respected and loved as his physician and friend.

[For a touching proof, see Johnson’s letter to Mrs. Thrale, June 1783.—A. B.]

³ My friend has, in this letter, relied upon my testimony, with a confidence of which the ground has escaped my recollection.

my last answer,—that I would not be deterred from detecting what I thought a cheat, by the menaces of a ruffian—put an end to our correspondence.

‘The state of the question is this. He and Dr. Blair, whom I consider as deceived, say, that he copied the poem from old manuscripts. His copies, if he had them, and I believe him to have none, are nothing. Where are the manuscripts? They can be shown if they exist, but they were never shown. *De non existentibus, et non apparentibus*, says our law, *eadem est ratio*. No man has a claim to credit upon his own word, when better evidence, if he had it, may be easily produced. But, so far as we can find, the Erse language was never written till very lately for the purposes of religion. A nation that cannot write, or a language that was never written, has no manuscripts.

‘But whatever he has he never offered to show. If old manuscripts should now be mentioned, I should, unless there were more evidence than can be easily had, suppose them another proof of Scotch conspiracy in national falsehood.

‘Do not censure the expression ; you know it to be true.

‘Dr. Memis’s question is so narrow as to allow no speculation ; and I have no facts before me but those which his advocate has produced against you.

‘I consulted this morning the president of the London College of Physicians, who says, that with us, *Doctor of Physic* (we do not say *Doctor of Medicine*), is the highest title that a practiser of physick can have ; that *Doctor* implies not only *Physician*, but teacher of physick ; that every *Doctor* is legally a *Physician* ; but no man, not a *Doctor*, can *practise physick* but by *licence* particularly granted. The doctorate is a licence of itself. It seems to us a very slender cause of prosecution.

‘I am now engaged, but in a little time I hope to do all you would have. My compliments to madam and Veronica.
—I am, sir, your most humble servant,

‘SAM. JOHNSON.

‘February 7, 1775.’

What words were used by Macpherson in his letter

to the venerable sage, I have never heard ; but they are generally said to have been of a nature very different from the language of literary contest. Dr. Johnson's answer appeared in the newspapers of the day, and has since been frequently republished ; but not with perfect accuracy. I give it as dictated to me by himself, written down in his presence, and authenticated by a note in his own handwriting, '*This, I think, is a true copy.*'¹

'MR. JAMES MACPHERSON,—I received your foolish and impudent letter. Any violence offered me I shall do my best to repel ; and what I cannot do for myself, the law shall do for me. I hope I shall not be deterred from detecting what I think a cheat by the menaces of a ruffian.

'What would you have me retract ? I thought your book an imposture : I think it an imposture still. For this opinion I have given my reasons to the public, which I here dare you to refute. Your rage I defy. Your abilities, since your Homer, are not so formidable ; and what I hear of your morals inclines me to pay regard not to what you shall say, but to what you shall prove. You may print this if you will.

'SAM. JOHNSON.

Mr. Macpherson little knew the character of Dr. Johnson, if he supposed that he could be easily intimidated ; for no man was ever more remarkable for personal courage. He had, indeed, an awful dread of death, or rather, 'of something after death' ; and what rational man, who seriously thinks of quitting all that he has ever known, and going into a new and unknown state of being, can be without that dread ? But his fear was from reflection ; his courage natural. His fear, in that one instance, was the result of philosophical and religious consideration. He feared death,

¹ I have deposited it in the British Museum.

but he feared nothing else, not even what might occasion death. Many instances of his resolution may be mentioned. One day, at Mr. Beauclerk's house in the country, when two large dogs were fighting, he went up to them, and beat them till they separated; and at another time, when told of the danger there was that a gun might burst if charged with many balls, he put in six or seven, and fired it off against a wall. Mr. Langton told me that when they were swimming together near Oxford, he cautioned Dr. Johnson against a pool which was reckoned particularly dangerous; upon which Johnson directly swam into it. He told me himself that one night he was attacked in the street by four men, to whom he would not yield, but kept them all at bay till the watch came up, and carried both him and them to the round house. In the play-house at Lichfield, as Mr. Garrick informed me, Johnson having for a moment quitted a chair which was placed for him between the side scenes, a gentleman took possession of it, and when Johnson on his return civilly demanded his seat, rudely refused to give it up; upon which Johnson laid hold of it, and tossed him and the chair into the pit. Foote, who so successfully revived the old comedy, by exhibiting living characters, had resolved to imitate Johnson on the stage, expecting great profits from his ridicule of so celebrated a man. Johnson being informed of his intention, and being at dinner at Mr. Thomas Davies's the bookseller, from whom I had the story, he asked Mr. Davies 'what was the common price of an oak stick'; and being answered sixpence, 'Why then, sir (said he), give me leave to send your servant to purchase me a shilling one. I'll have a double

quantity ; for I am told Foote means to *take me off*, as he calls it, and I am determined the fellow shall not do it with impunity.' Davies took care to acquaint Foote of this, which effectually checked the wantonness of the mimic. Mr. Macpherson's menaces made Johnson provide himself with the same implement of defence ; and had he been attacked, I have no doubt that, old as he was, he would have made his corporal prowess be felt as much as his intellectual.

His *Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland* is a most valuable performance. It abounds in extensive philosophical views of society, and in ingenious sentiment and lively description. A considerable part of it, indeed, consists of speculations, which, many years before he saw the wild regions which we visited together, probably had employed his attention, though the actual sight of those scenes undoubtedly quickened and augmented them. Mr. Orme, the very able historian, agreed with me in this opinion, which he thus strongly expressed :—' There are in that book thoughts, which, by long revolution in the great mind of Johnson, have been formed and polished like pebbles rolled in the ocean !'

That he was to some degree of excess a *true-born Englishman*, so as to have entertained an undue prejudice against both the country and the people of Scotland, must be allowed. But it was a prejudice of the head, and not of the heart. He had no ill-will to the Scotch ; for, if he had been conscious of that, he never would have thrown himself into the bosom of their country, and trusted to the protection of its remote inhabitants with a fearless confidence. His remark upon the nakedness of the country, from its being

denuded of trees, was made after having travelled two hundred miles along the eastern coast, where certainly trees are not to be found near the road ; and he said it was 'a map of the road' which he gave. His disbelief of the authenticity of the poems ascribed to Ossian, a Highland bard, was confirmed in the course of his journey, by a very strict examination of the evidence offered for it ; and although their authenticity was made too much a national point by the Scotch, there were many respectable persons in that country, who did not concur in this ; so that his judgment upon the question ought not to be decried, even by those who differ from him. As to myself, I can only say, upon a subject now become very uninteresting, that when the fragments of Highland poetry first came out, I was much pleased with their wild peculiarity, and was one of those who subscribed to enable their editor, Mr. Macpherson, then a young man, to make a search in the Highlands and Hebrides for a long poem in the Erse language, which was reported to be preserved somewhere in those regions. But when there came forth an epic poem in six books, with all the common circumstances of former compositions of that nature ; and when, upon an attentive examination of it, there was found a perpetual recurrence of the same images which appear in the fragments ; and when no ancient manuscript to authenticate the work was deposited in any public library, though that was insisted on as a reasonable proof, *who* could forbear to doubt?

Johnson's grateful acknowledgments of kindness received in the course of this tour, completely refute the brutal reflections which have been thrown out

against him, as if he had made an ungrateful return ; and his delicacy in sparing in his book those who we find from his letters to Mrs. Thrale were just objects of censure, is much to be admired. His candour and amiable disposition is conspicuous from his conduct, when informed by Mr. Macleod of Raasay, that he had committed a mistake, which gave that gentleman some uneasiness. He wrote him a courteous and kind letter, and inserted in the newspapers an advertisement correcting the mistake.¹

The observations of my friend Mr. Dempster in a letter written to me, soon after he had read Dr. Johnson's book, are so just and liberal that they cannot be too often repeated :

'There is nothing in the book, from beginning to end, that a Scotchman need to take amiss. What he says of the country is true ; and his observations on the people are what must naturally occur to a sensible, observing, and reflecting inhabitant of a convenient metropolis, where a man on thirty pounds a year may be better accommodated with all the little wants of life than Coll or Sir Allan.

'I am charmed with his researches concerning the Erse language, and the antiquity of their manuscripts. I am quite convinced ; and I shall rank Ossian and his Fingals and Oscars amongst the nursery tales, not the true history of our country, in all time to come.

'Upon the whole the book cannot displease, for it has no pretensions. The author neither says he is a geographer, nor an antiquarian, nor very learned in the history of Scotland, nor a naturalist, nor a fossilist. The manners of the people, and the face of the country, are all he attempts to describe, or seems to have thought of. Much were it to be wished that they who have travelled into more remote, and of course more

¹ See *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides*, 3rd edit., p. 529.

ourious regions, had all possessed his good sense. Of the state of learning, his observations on Glasgow University show he has formed a very sound judgment. He understands our climate too: and he has accurately observed the changes, however slow and imperceptible to us, which Scotland has undergone in consequence of the blessings of liberty and internal peace.'

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Mr. Knox, another native of Scotland, who has since made the same tour, and published an account of it, is equally liberal. 'I have read (says he), his book again and again, travelled with him from Berwick to Glenelg, through countries with which I am well acquainted; sailed with him from Glenelg to Raasay, Skye, Rum, Coll, Mull, and Icolmkill, but have not been able to correct him in any matter of consequence. I have often admired the accuracy, the precision, and the justness of what he advances respecting both the country and the people.

'The Doctor has everywhere delivered his sentiments with freedom, and in many instances with a seeming regard for the benefit of the inhabitants and the ornament of the country. His remarks on the want of trees and hedges for shade, as well as for shelter to the cattle, are well founded, and merit the thanks, not the illiberal censure of the natives. He also felt for the distresses of the Highlanders, and explodes with great propriety the bad management of the grounds, and the neglect of timber in the Hebrides.'

Having quoted Johnson's just compliments on the Raasay family, he says: 'On the other hand, I found this family equally lavish in their encomiums upon the Doctor's conversation, and his subsequent civilities to

a young gentleman of that country, who, upon waiting upon him at London, was well received, and experienced all the attention and regard that a warm friend could bestow. Mr. Macleod having also been at London waited upon the Doctor, who provided a magnificent and expensive entertainment in honour of his old Hebridean acquaintance.'

And, talking of the military road by Fort Augustus, he says: 'By this road, though one of the most rugged in Great Britain, the celebrated Dr. Johnson passed from Inverness to the Hebride Isles. His observations on the country and people are extremely correct, judicious, and instructive.'¹

Mr. Tytler, the acute and able vindicator of Mary, Queen of Scots, in one of his letters to Mr. James Elphinston, published in that gentleman's *Forty Years' Correspondence*, says: 'I read Dr. Johnson's *Tour* with very great pleasure. Some few errors he has fallen into, but of no great importance, and those are lost in the numberless beauties of his work.

'If I had leisure I could perhaps point out the most exceptionable places; but at present I am in the country, and have not his book at hand. It is plain he meant to speak well of Scotland; and he has in my apprehension done us great honour in the most capital article, the character of the inhabitants.'

His private letters to Mrs. Thrale, written during the course of his journey, which therefore may be supposed to convey his genuine feelings at the time, abound in such benignant sentiments towards the people who showed him civilities, that no man, whose

¹ Page 103.

temper is not very harsh and sour, can retain a doubt of the goodness of his heart.

It is painful to recollect with what rancour he was assailed by numbers of shallow, irritable North Britons, on account of his supposed injurious treatment of their country and countrymen in his *Journey*. Had there been any just ground for such a charge, would the virtuous and candid Dempster have given his opinion of the book in the terms in which I have quoted? Would the patriotic Knox¹ have spoken of it as he has done? Would Mr. Tytler, surely

‘a Scot, if ever Scot there were,’

have expressed himself thus? And let me add, that citizen of the world, as I hold myself to be, I have that degree of predilection for my *natale solum*, nay, I have that just sense of the merit of an ancient nation which has been ever renowned for its valour, which in former times maintained its independence against a powerful neighbour, and in modern times has been equally distinguished for its ingenuity and industry in civilised life, that I should have felt a generous indignation at any injustice done to it. Johnson treated Scotland no worse than he did even his best friends, whose characters he used to give as they appeared to him, both in light and shade. Some people, who had not exercised their minds sufficiently, condemned him for censuring his friends. But Sir Joshua Reynolds, whose philosophical penetration and justness of thinking were not less known to those who

¹ I observed with much regret, while the first edition of this work was passing through the press (August 1790), that this ingenious gentleman was dead.

lived with him, than his genius in his art is admired by the world, explained his conduct thus: 'He was fond of discrimination, which he could not show without pointing out the bad as well as the good in every character; and as his friends were those whose characters he knew best, they afforded him the best opportunity for showing the acuteness of his judgment.'

He expressed to his friend Mr. Windham of Norfolk, his wonder at the extreme jealousy of the Scotch, and their resentment at having their country described by him as it really was; when to say that it was a country as good as England, would have been a gross falsehood. 'None of us (said he) would be offended if a foreigner who has travelled here should say, that vines and olives don't grow in England.' And as to his prejudice against the Scotch, which I always ascribed to that nationality which he observed in *them*, he said to the same gentleman, 'When I find a Scotchman to whom an Englishman is as a Scotchman, that Scotchman shall be as an Englishman to me.' His intimacy with many gentlemen of Scotland, and his employing so many natives of that country as his amanuenses, prove that his prejudice was not virulent; and I have deposited in the British Museum, amongst other pieces of his writing, the following note in answer to one from me, asking if he would meet me at dinner at the Mitre, though a friend of mine, a Scotchman, was to be there:—'Mr. Johnson does not see why Mr. Boswell should suppose a Scotchman less acceptable than any other man. He will be at the Mitre.'

My much-valued friend Dr. Barnard, now bishop of Killaloe, having once expressed to him an apprehen-

sion, that if he should visit Ireland he might treat the people of that country more unfavourably than he had done the Scotch, he answered, with strong pointed double-edged wit, 'Sir, you have no reason to be afraid of me. The Irish are not in a conspiracy to cheat the world by false representations of the merits of their countrymen. No, sir; the Irish are a fair people;—they never speak well of one another.'

Johnson told me of an instance of Scottish nationality, which made a very unfavourable impression upon his mind. A Scotchman of some consideration in London, solicited him to recommend by the weight of his learned authority, to be master of an English school, a person of whom he who recommended him confessed he knew no more but that he was his countryman. Johnson was shocked at this unconscientious conduct.

All the miserable cavillings against his *Journey* in newspapers, magazines, and other fugitive publications—I can speak from certain knowledge—only furnished him with sport. At last there came out a scurrilous volume, larger than Johnson's own, filled with malignant abuse, under a name, real or fictitious, of some low man in an obscure corner of Scotland, though supposed to be the work of another Scotchman, who has found means to make himself well known both in Scotland and England. The effect which it had upon Johnson was, to produce this pleasant observation to Mr. Seward, to whom he lent the book: 'This fellow must be a blockhead. They don't know how to go about their abuse. Who will read a five-shilling book against me? No, sir, if they had wit, they should have kept pelting me with pamphlets.'

MR. BOSWELL TO DR. JOHNSON

'Edinburgh, 18, 1775.

'You would have been very well pleased if you had dined with me to-day. I had for my guests, Macquharrie, young Maclean of Coll, the successor of our friend, a very amiable man, though not marked with such active qualities as his brother; Mr. Maclean of Torloisk in Mull, a gentleman of Sir Allan's family; and two of the clan Grant; so that the Highland and Hebridean genius reigned. We had a great deal of conversation about you, and drank your health in a bumper. The toast was not proposed by me, which is a circumstance to be remarked, for I am now so connected with you, that anything I can say or do to your honour has not the value of an additional compliment. It is only giving you a guinea out of that treasure of admiration which already belongs to you, and which is no hidden treasure; for I suppose my admiration of you is co-existent with the knowledge of my character.

'I find that the Highlanders and Hebrideans in general are much fonder of your *Journey* than the low country or *hither* Scots. One of the Grants said to-day that he was sure you were a man of good heart, and a candid man, and seemed to hope he should be able to convince you of the antiquity of a good proportion of the poems of Ossian. After all that has passed, I think the matter is capable of being proved to a certain degree. I am told that Macpherson got one old Erse ms. from Clanranald, for the restitution of which he executed a formal obligation; and it is affirmed that the Gaelic (call it Erse or call it Irish) has been written in the Highlands and Hebrides for many centuries. It is reasonable to suppose that such of the inhabitants as acquired any learning, possessed the art of writing as well as their Irish neighbours and Celtic cousins; and the question is, can sufficient evidence be shown of this?

'Those who are skilled in ancient writings can determine the age of mss., or at least can ascertain the century in which they were written; and if men of veracity who are so skilled shall tell us that mss. in the possession of families in the Highlands and Isles are the works of a remote age, I think we should be convinced by their testimony.

‘There is now come to this city Ranald Macdonald from the Isle of Eigg, who has several MSS. of Erse poetry, which he wishes to publish by subscription. I have engaged to take three copies of the book, the price of which is to be six shillings, as I would subscribe for all the Erse that can be printed, be it old or new, that the language may be preserved. This man says that some of his manuscripts are ancient; and, to be sure, one of them which was shown to me does appear to have the duskiness of antiquity.

‘The inquiry is not yet quite hopeless, and I should think that the exact truth may be discovered, if proper means be used.—I am, etc.,

JAMES BOSWELL.’

TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

‘DEAR SIR,—I am sorry that I could get no books for my friends in Scotland. Mr. Strahan has at last promised to send two dozen to you. If they come, put the name of my friends into them; you may cut them out¹ and paste them with a little starch in the book.’

‘You then are going wild about Ossian. Why do you think any part can be proved? The dusky manuscript of Eigg is probably not fifty years old; if it be a hundred it proves nothing. The tale of Clanranald is no proof. Has Clanranald told it? Can he prove it? There are, I believe, no Erse manuscripts. None of the old families had a single letter in Erse that we heard of. You say it is likely that they could write. The learned, if any learned there were, could; but knowing, by that learning, some written language, in that language they wrote, as letters had never been applied to their own. If there are manuscripts, let them be shown, with some proof that they are not forged for the occasion. You say many can remember parts of Ossian. I believe all those parts are versions of the English; at least there is no proof of their antiquity.

‘Macpherson is said to have made some translations himself; and having taught a boy to write it, ordered him to say that he had learned it of his grandmother. The boy, when

¹ From a list in his handwriting.

he grew up, told the story. This Mrs. Williams heard at Mr. Strahan's table. Don't be credulous; you know how little a Highlander can be trusted. Macpherson is, so far as I know, very quiet. Is not that proof enough? Everything is against him. No visible manuscript: no inscription in the language: no correspondence among friends: no transaction of business, of which a single scrap remains in the ancient families. Macpherson's pretence is that the character was Saxon. If he had not talked unskilfully of *manuscripts* he might have fought with oral tradition much longer. As to Mr. Grant's information, I suppose he knows much less of the matter than ourselves.

'In the meantime, the bookseller says that the sale¹ is sufficiently quick. They printed four thousand. Correct your copy wherever it is wrong, and bring it up. Your friends will all be glad to see you. I think of going myself into the country about May.

'I am sorry that I have not managed to send the book sooner. I have left four for you, and do not restrict you absolutely to follow my directions in the distribution. You must use your own discretion.

'Make my compliments to Mrs. Boswell: I suppose she is now beginning to forgive me.—I am, dear sir, your humble servant,

SAM. JOHNSON.

'Feb. 25, 1775.'

On Tuesday, March 21, I arrived in London; and on repairing to Dr. Johnson's before dinner, found him in his study, sitting with Mr. Peter Garrick, the elder brother of David, strongly resembling him in countenance and voice, but of more sedate and placid manners. Johnson informed me that though Mr. Beauclerk was in great pain, it was hoped he was not in danger, and that he now wished to consult Dr. Heberden, to try the effect of a '*new understanding*.' Both at this interview and in the evening at Mr. Thrale's, where he and Mr. Peter Garrick and I met

¹ Of his *Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland*.

again, he was vehement on the subject of the Ossian controversy, observing : ‘We do not know that there are any ancient Erse manuscripts ; and we have no other reason to disbelieve that there are men with three heads, but that we do not know that there are any such men.’ He also was outrageous upon his supposition that my countrymen ‘loved Scotland better than truth,’ saying, ‘All of them,—nay, not all,—but *droves* of them, would come up, and attest anything for the honour of Scotland.’ He also persevered in his wild allegation, that he questioned if there was a tree between Edinburgh and the English border older than himself. I assured him he was mistaken, and suggested that the proper punishment would be that he should receive a stripe at every tree above a hundred years old that was found within that space. He laughed, and said, ‘I believe I might submit to it for a *bawbee*.’

The doubts which, in my correspondence with him, I had ventured to state as to the justice and wisdom of the conduct of Great Britain towards the American colonies, while I at the same time requested that he would enable me to inform myself upon that momentous subject, he had altogether disregarded ; and had recently published a pamphlet, entitled, *Taxation no Tyranny ; an Answer to the Resolutions and Address of the American Congress*.

He had long before indulged most unfavourable sentiments of our fellow-subjects in America. For, as early as 1769, I was told by Dr. John Campbell, that he had said of them, ‘Sir, they are a race of convicts, and ought to be thankful for anything we allow them short of hanging.’

Of this performance I avoided to talk with him; for I had now formed a clear and settled opinion, that the people of America were well warranted to resist a claim that their fellow-subjects in the mother-country should have the entire command of their fortunes, by taxing them without their own consent; and the extreme violence which it breathed, appeared to me so unsuitable to the mildness of a Christian philosopher, and so directly opposite to the principles of peace which he had so beautifully recommended in his pamphlet respecting Falkland's Islands, that I was sorry to see him appear in so unfavourable a light. Besides, I could not perceive in it that ability of argument, or that felicity of expression, for which he was, upon other occasions, so eminent. Positive assertion, sarcastical severity, and extravagant ridicule, which he himself reprobated as a test of truth, were united in this rhapsody.

That this pamphlet was written at the desire of those who were then in power, I have no doubt; and, indeed, he owned to me, that it had been revised and curtailed by some of them. He told me that they had struck out one passage, which was to this effect: 'That the Colonists could with no solidity argue from their not having been taxed while in their infancy, that they should not now be taxed. We do not put a calf into the plough; we wait till he is an ox.' He said, 'They struck it out either critically as too ludicrous, or politically as too exasperating. I care not which. It was their business. If an architect says, I will build five stories, and the man who employs him says, I will have only three, the employer is to decide.' 'Yes, sir (said I), in ordinary cases. But should it

be so when the architect gives his skill and labour *gratis*?’

Unfavourable as I am constrained to say my opinion of this pamphlet was, yet, since it was congenial with the sentiments of numbers at that time, and as everything relating to the writings of Dr. Johnson is of importance in literary history, I shall therefore insert some passages which were struck out, it does not appear why, either by himself or those who revised it. They appear printed in a few proof leaves of it in my possession, marked with corrections in his own handwriting. I shall distinguish them by italics.

In the paragraph where he says the Americans were incited to resistance by European intelligence from ‘men whom they thought their friends, but who were friends only to themselves,’ there followed, ‘*and made by their selfishness the enemies of their country.*’

And the next paragraph ran thus :

‘On the original contrivers of mischief, *rather than on those whom they have deluded*, let an insulted nation pour out its vengeance.’

The paragraph which came next was in these words :

‘*Unhappy is that country in which men can hope for advancement by favouring its enemies. The tranquillity of stable government is not always easily preserved against the machinations of single innovators ; but what can be the hope of quiet, when factions hostile to the legislature can be openly formed and openly avowed ?*’

After the paragraph which now concludes the pamphlet there followed this, in which he certainly means the great Earl of Chatham, and glances at a certain popular Lord Chancellor :

'If, by the fortune of war, they drive us utterly away, what they will do next can only be conjectured. If a new monarchy is erected they will want a King. He who first takes into his hand the sceptre of America should have a name of good omen. William has been known both a conqueror and deliverer; and perhaps England, however contemned, might yet supply them with another William. Whigs, indeed, are not willing to be governed; and it is possible that King William may be strongly inclined to guide their measures: but Whigs have been cheated like other mortals, and suffered their leader to become their tyrant, under the name of their Protector. What more they will receive from England no man can tell. In their rudiments of empire they may want a Chancellor.'

Then came this paragraph:

'Their numbers are, at present, not quite sufficient for the greatness which, in some form of government or other, is to rival the ancient monarchies; but by Dr. Franklin's rule of progression they will in a century and a quarter be more than equal to the inhabitants of Europe. When the Whigs of America are thus multiplied, let the Princes of the earth tremble in their palaces. If they should continue to double and to double, their own hemisphere would not contain them. But let not our boldest oppugners of authority look forward with delight to this futurity of Whiggism.'

How it ended I know not, as it is cut off abruptly at the foot of the last of these proof pages.

His pamphlets in support of the measures of administration were published on his own account, and he afterwards collected them into a volume, with the title of *Political Tracts, by the Author of the 'Rambler,'* with this motto:

*'Fallitur, egregio quisquis sub Principe credit
Servitium; nunquam libertas gratior extat
Quam sub Rege pio.'*

CLAUDIAN, in *II. Cons. Stilich.* lib. v. 113.

These pamphlets drew upon him numerous attacks. Against the common weapons of literary warfare he was hardened ; but there were two instances of animadversion which I communicated to him, and from what I could judge, both from his silence and his looks, appeared to me to impress him much.

One was *A Letter to Dr. Samuel Johnson, occasioned by his late political Publications*. It appeared previous to his *Taxation no Tyranny*, and was written by Dr. Joseph Towers. In that performance Dr. Johnson was treated with the respect due to so eminent a man, while his conduct as a political writer was boldly and pointedly arraigned, as inconsistent with the character of one, who, if he did employ his pen upon politics, 'it might reasonably be expected should distinguish himself, not by party violence and rancour, but by moderation and by wisdom.'

It concluded thus :

'I would, however, wish you to remember, should you again address the public under the character of a political writer, that luxuriance of imagination or energy of language will ill compensate for the want of candour, of justice, and of truth. And I shall only add, that should I hereafter be disposed to read, as I heretofore have done, the most excellent of all your performances, the *Rambler*, the pleasure which I have been accustomed to find in it will be much diminished by the reflection that the writer of so moral, so elegant, and so valuable a work, was capable of prostituting his talents in such productions as *The False Alarm*, the *Thoughts on the Transactions respecting Falkland's Islands*, and *The Patriot*.'

I am willing to do justice to the merit of Dr. Towers, of whom I will say, that although I abhor his Whiggish democratical notions and propensities (for I will not

call them principles), I esteem him as an ingenious, knowing, and very convivial man.

The other instance was a paragraph of a letter to me, from my old and most intimate friend the Reverend Mr. Temple, who wrote the character of Gray, which has had the honour to be adopted both by Mr. Mason and Dr. Johnson in their accounts of that poet. The words were, ‘How can your great, I will not say your *pious*, but your *moral* friend, support the barbarous measures of administration, which they have not the face to ask even their infidel pensioner Hume to defend?’

However confident of the rectitude of his own mind, Johnson may have felt sincere uneasiness that his conduct should be erroneously imputed to unworthy motives, by good men; and that the influence of his valuable writings should on that account be in any degree obstructed or lessened.

He complained to a right honourable friend of distinguished talents and very elegant manners,¹ with whom he maintained a long intimacy, and whose generosity towards him will afterwards appear, that his pension having been given to him as a literary character, he had been applied to by administration to write political pamphlets; and he was even so much irritated, that he declared his resolution to resign his pension. His friend showed him the impropriety of such a measure, and he afterwards expressed his gratitude, and said he had received good advice. To that friend he once signified a wish to have his pension secured to him for his life; but he neither asked nor

¹ Mr. W. G. (Single-speech) Hamilton.

received from government any reward whatsoever for his political labours.

On Friday, March 24, I met him at the Literary Club, where were Mr. Beauclerk, Mr. Langton, Mr. Colman, Dr. Percy, Mr. Vesey, Sir Charles Bunbury, Dr. George Fordyce, Mr. Steevens, and Mr. Charles Fox. Before he came in, we talked of his *Journey to the Western Islands*, and of his coming away, 'willing to believe the second sight,'¹ which seemed to excite some ridicule. I was then so impressed with the truth of many of the stories of which I had been told, that I avowed my conviction, saying, 'He is only *willing* to believe: I *do* believe. The evidence is enough for me, though not for his great mind. What will not fill a quart bottle will fill a pint bottle. I am filled with belief.' 'Are you?' (said Colman) then cork it up.'

I found his *Journey* the common topic of conversation in London at this time, wherever I happened to be. At one of Lord Mansfield's formal Sunday evening conversations, strangely called *levées*, his Lordship addressed me, 'We have all been reading your travels, Mr. Boswell.' I answered, 'I was but the humble attendant of Dr. Johnson.' The Chief Justice replied, with that air and manner which none who ever saw and heard him can forget, 'He speaks ill of nobody but Ossian.'

Johnson was in high spirits this evening at the club, and talked with great animation and success. He attacked Swift, as he used to do upon all occasions. 'The *Tale of a Tub* is so much superior to his other

¹ Johnson's *Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland*, edit. 1785, p. 256.

writings, that one can hardly believe he was the author of it:¹ there is in it such a vigour of mind, such a swarm of thoughts, so much of nature, and art, and life.' I wondered to hear him say of *Gulliver's Travels*, 'When once you have thought of big men and little men it is very easy to do all the rest.' I endeavoured to make a stand for Swift, and tried to rouse those who were much more able to defend him; but in vain. Johnson at last, of his own accord, allowed very great merit to the inventory of articles found in the pocket of 'the Man Mountain,' particularly the description of his watch, which, it was conjectured, was his god, as he consulted it upon all occasions. He observed that 'Swift put his name to but two things (after he had a name to put), *The Plan for the Improvement of the English Language*, and the last *Drapier's Letter*.'

From Swift, there was an easy transition to Mr. Thomas Sheridan. JOHNSON: 'Sheridan is a wonderful admirer of the tragedy of Douglas, and presented its author with a gold medal. Some years ago at a coffee-house in Oxford, I called to him, "Mr. Sheridan,

¹ This doubt has been much agitated on both sides, I think without good reason. See Addison's *Freeholder*, May 4, 1714: An Apology for the *Tale of a Tub*, Dr. Hawkesworth's Preface to Swift's Works, and Swift's Letter to Tooke the Printer, and Tooke's Answer, in that Collection; Sheridan's *Life of Swift*; Mr. Courtenay's note on p. 3 of his *Poetical Review of the Literary and Moral Character of Dr. Johnson*; and Mr. Cooksey's *Essay on the Life and Character of John, Lord Somers, Baron of Evesham*.

Dr. Johnson here speaks only to the *internal evidence*. I take leave to differ from him, having a very high estimation of the powers of Dr. Swift. His *Sentiments of a Church-of-England Man*, his *Sermon on the Trinity*, and other serious pieces, prove his learning as well as his acuteness in logic and metaphysics; and his various compositions of a different cast exhibit not only wit, humour, and ridicule, but a knowledge 'of nature, and art, and life,' a combination, therefore, of those powers, when (as the *Apology* says) the author was young, his invention at the height, and his reading fresh in his head,' might surely produce the *Tale of a Tub*.

Mr. Sheridan, how came you to give a gold medal to Home, for writing that foolish play?" This, you see, was wanton and insolent; but I *meant* to be wanton and insolent. A medal has no value but as a stamp of merit. And was Sheridan to assume to himself the right of giving that stamp? If Sheridan was magnificent enough to bestow a gold medal as an honorary reward of dramatic excellence, he should have requested one of the Universities to choose the person on whom it should be conferred. Sheridan had no right to give a stamp of merit: it was counterfeiting Apollo's coin.'

On Monday, March 27, I breakfasted with him at Mr. Strahan's. He told us that he was engaged to go that evening to Mrs. Abington's benefit. 'She was visiting some ladies whom I was visiting, and begged that I would come to her benefit. I told her I could not hear: but she insisted so much on my coming that it would have been brutal to have refused her.' This was a speech quite characteristical. He loved to bring forward his having been in the gay circles of life; and he was perhaps a little vain of the solicitations of this elegant and fashionable actress. He told us the play was to be *The Hypocrite*, altered from Cibber's *Nonjuror*, so as to satirise the Methodists. 'I do not think (said he), the character of the Hypocrite justly applicable to the Methodists, but it was very applicable to the Nonjurors. I once said to Dr. Madan, a clergyman of Ireland, who was a great Whig, that perhaps a Nonjuror would have been less criminal in taking the oaths imposed by the ruling power, than refusing them; because refusing them necessarily laid him under almost an irresistible

temptation to be more criminal ; for a man *must* live, and if he precludes himself from the support furnished by the establishment, will probably be reduced to very wicked shifts to maintain himself.'¹ BOSWELL: 'I should think, sir, that a man who took the oaths contrary to his principles was a determined wicked man, because he was sure he was committing perjury, whereas a Nonjuror might be insensibly led to do what was wrong, without being so directly conscious of it.' JOHNSON: 'Why, sir, a man who goes to bed to his patron's wife is pretty sure that he is committing wickedness.' BOSWELL: 'Did the nonjuring clergymen do so, sir?' JOHNSON: 'I am afraid many of them did.'²

¹ This was not merely a cursory remark ; for in his *Life of Fenton* he observes, 'With many other wise and virtuous men, who at that time of discord and debate [about the beginning of this century] consulted conscience well or ill informed, more than interest, he doubted the legality of the government ; and refusing to qualify himself for public employment by taking the oaths required, left the University without a degree.' This conduct Johnson calls 'perverseness of integrity.'

The question concerning the morality of taking oaths of whatever kind, imposed by the prevailing power at the time, rather than to be excluded from all consequence, or even any considerable usefulness in society, has been agitated with all the acuteness of casuistry. It is related that he who devised the oath of abjuration, profligately boasted that he had framed a test which should 'damn one half of the nation, and starve the other.' Upon minds not exalted to inflexible rectitude, or minds in which zeal for a party is predominant to excess, taking that oath against conviction may have been palliated under the plea of necessity or ventured upon in heat, as upon the whole producing more good than evil.

At a county election in Scotland many years ago, when there was a warm contest between the friends of the Hanoverian succession and those against it, the oath of abjuration having been demanded, the freeholders upon one side rose to go away. Upon which a very sanguine gentleman, one of their number, ran to the door to stop them, calling out with much earnestness, 'Stay, stay, my friends, and let us swear the rogues out of it !'

² [This is a mysterious saying, nor am I aware of the evidence on which it rests. Johnson was well disposed to the Nonjurors, who numbered amongst them the most learned and the most devoted of the Anglican clergy and laity. Johnson is not likely to have been mistaken, for though he never entered a nonjuring place of worship, he was in the way of hearing about them.—A. B.]

I was startled at this argument, and could by no means think it convincing. Had not his own father complied with the requisition of government (as to which he once observed to me when I pressed him upon it, '*That, sir, he was to settle with himself*'), he would probably have thought more unfavourably of a Jacobite who took the oaths:

‘had he not resembled
My father as he *swore*.’

Mr. Strahan talked of launching into the great ocean of London, in order to have a chance for rising into eminence; and observing that many men were kept back from trying their fortunes there, because they were born to a competency, said, ‘Small certainties are the bane of men of talents’; which Johnson confirmed. Mr. Strahan put Johnson in mind of a remark which he had made to him; ‘There are few ways in which a man can be more innocently employed than in getting money.’ ‘The more one thinks of this (said Strahan), the juster it will appear.’

Mr. Strahan had taken a poor boy from the country as an apprentice upon Johnson’s recommendation. Johnson having inquired after him, said, ‘Mr. Strahan, let me have five guineas on account, and I’ll give this boy one. Nay, if a man recommends a boy and does nothing for him, it is sad work. Call him down.’

I followed him into the courtyard behind Mr. Strahan’s house; and there I had a proof of what I had heard him profess, that he talked alike to all. ‘Some people tell you that they let themselves down to the capacity of their hearers. I never do that. I

speak uniformly, in as intelligible a manner as I can.'

'Well, my boy, how do you go on?' 'Pretty well, sir; but they are afraid I an't strong enough for some parts of the business.' JOHNSON: 'Why, I shall be sorry for it; for when you consider with how little mental power and corporeal labour a printer can get a guinea a week, it is a very desirable occupation for you. Do you hear,—take all the pains you can; and if this does not do, we must think of some other way of life for you. There's a guinea.'

Here was one of the many, many instances of his active benevolence. At the same time, the slow and sonorous solemnity with which, while he bent himself down, he addressed a little thick short-legged boy, contrasted with the boy's awkwardness and awe, could not but excite some ludicrous emotions.

I met him at Drury Lane playhouse in the evening. Sir Joshua Reynolds, at Mrs. Abington's request, had promised to bring a body of wits to her benefit; and having secured forty places in the front boxes, had done me the honour to put me in the group. Johnson sat on the seat directly behind me; and as he could neither see nor hear at such a distance from the stage, he was wrapped up in grave abstraction, and seemed quite a cloud amidst all the sunshine of glitter and gaiety. I wondered at his patience in sitting out a play of five acts and a farce of two. He said very little; but after the prologue to *Bon Ton* had been spoken, which he could hear pretty well from the more slow and distinct utterance, he talked on prologue-writing, and observed, 'Dryden has written prologues superior to any that David Garrick has written; but

David Garrick has written more good prologues than Dryden has done. It is wonderful that he has been able to write such a variety of them.'

At Mr. Beauclerk's, where I supped, was Mr. Garrick, whom I made happy with Johnson's praise of his prologues; and I suppose, in gratitude to him, he took up one of his favourite topics, the nationality of the Scotch, which he maintained in a pleasant manner, with the aid of a little poetical fiction. 'Come, come, don't deny it: they are really national. Why, now, the Adams are as liberal-minded men as any in the world: but, I don't know how it is, all their workmen are Scotch. You are, to be sure, wonderfully free from that nationality: but so it happens that you employ the only Scotch shoe-black in London.' He imitated the manner of his old master with ludicrous exaggeration; repeating, with pauses and half-whistlings interjected,

'Os homini sublime dedit,—cœlumque tueri
Jussit,—et erectos ad sidera—tollere vultus, ¹

looking downwards all the time, and, while pronouncing the four last words, absolutely touching the ground with a kind of contorted gesticulation.

Garrick, however, when he pleased, could imitate Johnson very exactly; for that great actor, with his distinguished powers of expression which were so universally admired, possessed also an admirable talent of mimicry. He was always jealous that Johnson spoke lightly of him. I recollect his exhibiting him to me one day, as if saying, 'Davy has some convivial pleasantry about him, but 'tis a futile fellow,'

¹ Ovid. *Met.* l. i. 85.

which he uttered perfectly with the tone and air of Johnson.

I cannot too frequently request of my readers, while they peruse my account of Johnson's conversation, to endeavour to keep in mind his deliberate and strong utterance. His mode of speaking was indeed very impressive;¹ and I wish it could be preserved as music is written, according to the very ingenious method of Mr. Steele,² who has shown how the recitation of Mr. Garrick, and other eminent speakers, might be transmitted to posterity *in score*.³

Next day I dined with Johnson at Mr. Thrale's. He attacked Gray, calling him 'a dull fellow.' Boswell: 'I understand he was reserved, and might appear dull in company; but surely he was not dull in poetry.' Johnson: 'Sir, he was dull in company, dull in his closet, dull everywhere. He was dull in a new way, and that made many people think him great. He was a mechanical poet.' He then repeated some

¹ My noble friend Lord Pembroke said once to me at Wilton, with a happy pleasantry and some truth, that, 'Dr. Johnson's sayings would not appear so extraordinary were it not for his *bow-wow way*.' The sayings themselves are generally of sterling merit; but, doubtless, his *manner* was an addition to their effect; and therefore should be attended to as much as may be. It is necessary, however, to guard those who were not acquainted with him against overcharged imitations or caricatures of his manner, which are frequently attempted, and many of which are second-hand copies from the late Mr. Henderson the actor, who, though a good mimic of some persons, did not represent Johnson correctly.

² See *Prosodia Rationalis; or, an Essay towards establishing the Melody and Measure of Speech, to be expressed and perpetuated by peculiar Symbols*. London, 1779.

³ I use the phrase *in score*, as Dr. Johnson has explained it in his Dictionary. '*A song in Score*, the words with the musical notes of a song annexed.' But I understand that in scientific propriety it means all the parts of a musical composition noted down in the characters by which it is exhibited to the eye of the skilful.

[It was *declamation* that Steele pretended to reduce to notation by new characters. This he called the *melody* of speech, not the *harmony*, which the term *in score* implies.—B.]

ludicrous lines, which have escaped my memory, and said, 'Is not that great, like his Odes?' Mrs. Thrale maintained that his Odes were melodious; upon which he exclaimed,

'Weave the warp, and weave the woof';—

I added, in a solemn tone,

'The winding sheet, of Edward's race.'

There is a good line. 'Ay (said he), and the next line is a good one' (pronouncing it contemptuously):

"Give ample verge and room enough,"—

'No, sir, there are but two stanzas in Gray's poetry, which are in his "Elegy in a Country Churchyard."' He then repeated the stanza,

'For who to dumb forgetfulness a prey,' etc.,

mistaking one word; for instead of *precincts* he said *confines*. He added, 'The other stanza I forget.'

A young lady who had married a man much her inferior in rank being mentioned, a question arose how a woman's relations should behave to her in such a situation; and, while I recapitulate the debate, and recollect what has since happened, I cannot but be struck in a manner that delicacy forbids me to express. While I contended that she ought to be treated with an inflexible steadiness of displeasure, Mrs. Thrale was all for mildness and forgiveness, and, according to the vulgar phrase, 'making the best of a bad bargain.' JOHNSON: 'Madam, we must distinguish. Were I a man of rank I would not let a daughter starve who had made a mean marriage; but having voluntarily degraded herself from the station which she was originally entitled to hold, I would support her only in that which she herself had chosen; and would not

put her on a level with my other daughters. You are to consider, madam, that it is our duty to maintain the subordination of civilised society; and when there is a gross and shameful deviation from rank it should be punished so as to deter others from the same perversion.'

After frequently considering this subject, I am more and more confirmed in what I then meant to express, and which was sanctioned by the authority and illustrated by the wisdom of Johnson; and I think it of the utmost consequence to the happiness of society, to which subordination is absolutely necessary. It is weak, and contemptible, and unworthy in a parent to relax in such a case. It is sacrificing general advantage to private feelings. And let it be considered, that the claim of a daughter who has acted thus, to be restored to her former situation, is either fantastical or unjust. If there be no value in the distinction of rank, what does she suffer by being kept in the situation to which she has descended? If there be a value in that distinction it ought to be steadily maintained. If indulgence be shown to such conduct, and the offenders know that in a longer or shorter time they shall be received as well as if they had not contaminated their blood by a base alliance, the great check upon that inordinate caprice which generally occasions low marriages, will be removed, and the fair and comfortable order of improved life will be miserably disturbed.

Lord Chesterfield's letters being mentioned, Johnson said: 'It was not to be wondered at that they had so great a sale, considering that they were the letters of a statesman, a wit, one who had been so much in

the mouths of mankind, one long accustomed *virûm volitare per ora.*'

On Friday, March 31, I supped with him and some friends at a tavern. One of the company attempted, with too much forwardness, to rally him on his late appearance at the theatre; but had reason to repent of his temerity. 'Why, sir, did you go to Mrs. Abington's benefit? Did you see?' JOHNSON: 'No, sir.' 'Did you hear?' JOHNSON: 'No, sir.' 'Why then, sir, did you go?' JOHNSON: 'Because, sir, she is a favourite of the public; and when the public cares the thousandth part for you that it does for her I will go to your benefit too.'

Next morning I won a small bet from Lady Diana Beauclerk, by asking him as to one of his particularities, which her ladyship laid I durst not do. It seems he had been frequently observed at the Club to put into his pocket the Seville oranges, after he had squeezed the juice of them into the drink which he made for himself. Beauclerk and Garrick talked of it to me, and seemed to think that he had a strange unwillingness to be discovered. We could not divine what he did with them; and this was the bold question to be put. I saw on his table the spoils of the preceding night, some fresh peels nicely scraped and cut into pieces. 'O, sir (said I), I now partly see what you do with the squeezed oranges which you put into your pocket at the Club.' JOHNSON: 'I have a great love for them.' BOSWELL: 'And pray, sir, what do you do with them? You scrape them, it seems, very neatly, and what next?' JOHNSON: 'Let them dry, sir.' BOSWELL: 'And what next?' JOHNSON: 'Nay, sir, you shall know their fate no further.' BOSWELL:

‘Then the world must be left in the dark. It must be said (assuming a mock solemnity), he scraped them, and let them dry, but what he did with them next he never could be prevailed upon to tell.’ JOHNSON : ‘Nay, sir, you should say it more emphatically :— he could not be prevailed upon, even by his dearest friends, to tell.’

He had this morning received his Diploma as Doctor of Laws from the University of Oxford. He did not vaunt of his new dignity, but I understood he was highly pleased with it. I shall here insert the progress and completion of that high academical honour, in the same manner as I have traced his obtaining that of Master of Arts.

TO THE REV. DR. FOTHERGILL, VICE-CHANCELLOR OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD, TO BE COMMUNICATED TO
THE HEADS OF HOUSES, AND PROPOSED IN CON-
VOCATION.

‘MR. VICE-CHANCELLOR AND GENTLEMEN,—The honour of the degree of M.A. by diploma, formerly conferred upon Mr. Samuel Johnson, in consequence of his having eminently distinguished himself by the publication of a series of *Essays* excellently calculated to form the manners of the people, and in which the cause of religion and morality has been maintained and recommended by the strongest powers of argument and elegance of language, reflected an equal degree of lustre upon the University itself.

‘The many learned labours which have since that time employed the attention and displayed the abilities of that great man so much to the advancement of literature and the benefit of the community, render him worthy of more distinguished honours in the Republic of letters ; and I persuade myself that I shall act agreeably to the sentiments of the whole University, in desiring that it may be proposed in Convocation to confer on him the degree of Doctor in Civil

Law by diploma, to which I readily give my consent; and am, Mr. Vice-Chancellor and gentlemen, your affectionate friend and servant,

NORTH.¹

'Downing Street, March 23, 1775.'

DIPLOMA

'CANCELLARIUS, Magistri, et Scholares Universitatis Oxoniensis omnibus ad quos præsentēs Literæ pervenerint, salutem in Domino Sempiternam.

'SCIATIS, virum illustrem, SAMUELEM JOHNSON, in omni humaniorum literarum genere eruditum, omniumque scientiarum comprehensione felicissimum, scriptis suis, ad popularium mores formandos summa verborum elegantia ac sententiarum gravitate compositis, ita olim inclaruisset, ut dignus videretur cui ab Academia sua eximia quædam laudis præmia deferrentur, quique in venerabilem Magistrorum Ordinem summa cum dignitate cooptaretur:

'Cum vero eundem clarissimum virum tot postea tantique labores, in patria præsertim lingua ornanda et stabilienda feliciter impensi, ita insigniverint, ut in Literarum Republica Princeps jam et Primarius jure habeatur; Nos, Cancellarius, Magistri, et Scholares Universitatis Oxoniensis, quo talis viri merita pari honoris remuneratione exæquentur, et perpetuum suæ simul laudis, nostræque erga literas propensissimæ voluntatis exstet monumentum, in solenni Convocatione Doctorum et Magistrorum Regentium, et non Regentium, prædictum SAMUELEM JOHNSON Dectorem in Jure Civili renunciavimus et constituimus, eumque virtute præsentis Diplomatis singulis juribus, privilegiis, et honoribus, ad istum gradum quaque pertinentibus, frui et gaudere jussimus. In cujus rei testimonium commune Universitatis Oxoniensis sigillum præsentibus apponi fecimus.

*'Datum in Domo nostræ Convocationis die tricesimo Mensis Martii, Anno Domini Millesimo septingentesimo, septuagesimo quinto.'*²

¹ Extracted from the Convocation Register, Oxford.

² The original is in my possession. He showed me the Diploma, and allowed me to read it, but would not consent to my taking a copy of it, fearing perhaps that I should blaze it abroad in his lifetime. His

'VIRO REVERENDO THOMÆ FOTHERGILL, S. T. P. UNIVERSITATIS OXONIENSIS VICE-CANCELLARIO.

'S. P. D.

'SAM. JOHNSON.

'*Multis non est opus, ut testimonium, quo, te præside, Oxonienses nomen meum posteris commendarunt, quali animo acceperim compertum faciam. Nemo sibi placens non lætatur; nemo sibi non placet, qui vobis, literarum arbitris, placere potuit. Hoc tamen habet incommodi tantum beneficium, quod mihi nunquam posthac sine vestræ famæ detrimento vel labi liceat vel cessare; semperque sit timendum, ne quod mihi tam eximie laudi est, vobis aliquando fiat opprobrio. Vale.*

'7 Id. Apr. 1775.'

He revised some sheets of Lord Hailes's *Annals of Scotland*, and wrote a few notes on the margin with red ink, which he bade me tell his lordship did not sink into the paper, and might be wiped off with a wet sponge, so that he did not spoil his manuscript. I observed to him that there were very few of his friends so accurate as that I could venture to put down in writing what they told me as his sayings. JOHNSON: 'Why should you write down *my* sayings?' BOSWELL: 'I write them when they are good.'

objection to this appears from his ninety-ninth letter to Mrs. Thrale, whom in his letter he thus scolds for the grossness of her flattery of him. 'The other Oxford news is, that they have sent me a degree of Doctor of Laws, with such praises in the Diploma as perhaps ought to make me ashamed: they are very like your praises. I wonder whether I shall ever show it to you.'

It is remarkable that he never, so far as I know, assumed his title of *Doctor*, but called himself *Mr.* Johnson, as appears from many of his cards or notes to myself, and I have seen many from him to other persons, in which he uniformly takes that designation. I once observed on his table a letter directed to him with the addition of *Esquire*, and objected to it as being a designation inferior to that of *Doctor*; but he checked me, and seemed pleased with it, because, as I conjectured, he liked to be sometimes taken out of the class of literary men, and to be merely *genteel*,—*un gentilhomme comme un autre*.

JOHNSON: 'Nay, you may as well write down the sayings of any one else that are good.' But *where*, I might with great propriety have added, can I find such?

I visited him by appointment in the evening, and we drank tea with Mrs. Williams. He told me that he had been in the company of a gentleman¹ whose extraordinary travels had been much the subject of conversation. But I found he had not listened to him with that full confidence, without which there is little satisfaction in the society of travellers. I was curious to hear what opinion so able a judge as Johnson had formed of his abilities, and I asked if he was not a man of sense. JOHNSON: 'Why, sir, he is not a distinct relater; and I should say he is neither abounding nor deficient in sense. I did not perceive any superiority of understanding.' BOSWELL: 'But will you not allow him a nobleness of resolution in penetrating into distant regions?' JOHNSON: 'That sir, is not to the present purpose: we are talking of sense. A fighting-cock has a nobleness of resolution.'

Next day, Sunday, April 2, I dined with him at Mr. Hoole's. We talked of Pope. JOHNSON: 'He wrote his *Dunciad* for fame. That was his primary motive. Had it not been for that the dunces might have railed against him till they were weary, without his troubling himself about them. He delighted to vex them, no doubt; but he had more delight in seeing how well he could vex them.'

The 'Odes to Obscurity and Oblivion,' in ridicule of 'cool Mason and warm Gray,' being mentioned,

¹ [Bruce, the famous and ill-treated Abyssinian traveller.—A. B.]

Johnson said: 'They are Colman's best things.' Upon its being observed that it was believed these Odes were made by Colman and Lloyd jointly;—JOHNSON: 'Nay, sir, how can two people make an Ode? Perhaps one made one of them, and one the other.' I observed that two people had made a play, and quoted the anecdote of Beaumont and Fletcher, who were brought under suspicion of treason, because while concerting the plan of a tragedy when sitting together at a tavern, one of them was overheard saying to the other, 'I'll kill the king.' JOHNSON: 'The first of these Odes is the best; but they are both good. They exposed a very bad kind of writing.' BOSWELL: 'Surely, sir, Mr. Mason's "*Elfrida*" is a fine poem: at least you will allow there are some good passages in it.' JOHNSON: 'There are now and then some good imitations of Milton's bad manner.'

I often wondered at his low estimation of the writings of Gray and Mason. Of Gray's poetry I have, in a former part of this work, expressed my high opinion; and for that of Mr. Mason I have ever entertained a warm admiration. His '*Elfrida*' is exquisite, both in poetical description and moral sentiment; and his '*Caractacus*' is a noble drama. Nor can I omit paying my tribute of praise to some of his smaller poems, which I have read with pleasure, and which no criticism shall persuade me not to like. If I wondered at Johnson's not tasting the works of Mason and Gray, still more have I wondered at their not tasting his works: that they should be insensible to his energy of diction, to his splendour of images and comprehension of thought. Tastes may differ as to the violin, the flute, the hautboy, in short all the lesser

instruments; but who can be insensible to the powerful impressions of the majestic organ?

His 'Taxation no Tyranny' being mentioned, he said: 'I think I have not been attacked enough for it. Attack is the reaction; I never think I have hit hard unless it rebounds.' BOSWELL: 'I don't know, sir, what you would be at. Five or six shots of small arms in every newspaper, and repeated cannonading in pamphlets, might, I think, satisfy you. But, sir, you'll never make out this match of which we have talked, with a certain political lady, since you are so severe against her principles.' JOHNSON: 'Nay, sir, I have the better chance for that. She is like the Amazons of old: she must be courted by the sword. But I have not been severe upon her.' BOSWELL: 'Yes, sir, you have made her ridiculous.' JOHNSON: 'That was already done, sir. To endeavour to make *her* ridiculous is like blacking the chimney.'

I put him in mind that the landlord at Ellon in Scotland said, that he heard he was the greatest man in England,—next to Lord Mansfield. 'Ay, sir (said he), the exception defined the idea. A Scotchman could go no further:

"The force of Nature could no further go."

Lady Miller's collection of verses by fashionable people, which were put into her Vase at Batheaston villa, near Bath, in competition for honorary prizes, being mentioned, he held them very cheap; *Bouts rimés* (said he), is a mere conceit, and an *old* conceit *now*; I wonder how people were persuaded to write in that manner for this lady.' I named a gentleman of his acquaintance who wrote for the Vase.

JOHNSON: 'He was a blockhead for his pains.' Boswell: 'The Duchess of Northumberland wrote.' JOHNSON: 'Sir, the Duchess of Northumberland may do what she pleases: nobody will say anything to a lady of her high rank. But I should be apt to throw —'s verses in his face.'

I talked of the cheerfulness of Fleet Street, owing to the constant quick succession of people which we perceive passing through it. JOHNSON: 'Why, sir, Fleet Street has a very animated appearance; but I think the full tide of human existence is at Charing Cross.'

He made the common remark on the unhappiness which men who have led a busy life experience, when they retire in expectation of enjoying themselves at ease, and that they generally languish for want of their habitual occupation, and wish to return to it. He mentioned as strong an instance of this as can well be imagined. 'An eminent tallow-chandler in London, who had acquired a considerable fortune, gave the trade in favour of his foreman, and went to live at a country house near town. He soon grew weary, and paid frequent visits to his old shop, where he desired they might let him know their *melting-days*, and he would come and assist them; which he accordingly did. Here, sir, was a man, to whom the most disgusting circumstances in the business to which he had been used was a relief from idleness.'

On Wednesday, April 5, I dined with him at Messieurs Dilly's, with Mr. John Scott of Amwell, the Quaker; Mr. Langton; Mr. Miller (now Sir John); and Dr. Thomas Campbell, an Irish clergyman, whom I took the liberty of inviting to Mr. Dilly's table,

having seen him at Mr. Thrale's, and been told that he had come to England chiefly with a view to see Dr. Johnson, for whom he entertained the highest veneration. He has since published *A Philosophical Survey of the South of Ireland*, a very entertaining book, which has, however, one fault: that it assumes the fictitious character of an Englishman.

We talked of public speaking.—JOHNSON: 'We must not estimate a man's powers by his being able or not able to deliver his sentiments in public. Isaac Hawkins Browne, one of the first wits of this country, got into Parliament and never opened his mouth. For my own part, I think it is more disgraceful never to try to speak, than to try it, and fail; as it is more disgraceful not to fight, than to fight and be beaten.' This argument appeared to me fallacious; for if a man has not spoken, it may be said that he would have done very well if he had tried; whereas, if he has tried and failed, there is nothing to be said for him. 'Why then (I asked), is it thought disgraceful for a man not to fight, and not disgraceful not to speak in public?' JOHNSON: 'Because there may be other reasons for a man's not speaking in public than want of resolution: he may have nothing to say (laughing). Whereas, sir, you know courage is reckoned the greatest of all virtues; because, unless a man has that virtue he has no security for preserving any other.'

He observed, that 'the statutes against bribery were intended to prevent upstarts with money from getting into Parliament'; adding, that 'if he were a gentleman of landed property he would turn out all his tenants who did not vote for the candidate whom

he supported.' LANGTON: 'Would not that, sir, be checking the freedom of election?' JOHNSON: 'Sir, the law does not mean that the privilege of voting should be independent of old family interest, of the permanent property of the country.'

On Thursday, April 6, I dined with him at Mr. Thomas Davies's, with Mr. Hicky the painter, and my old acquaintance Mr. Moody the player.

Dr. Johnson, as usual, spoke contemptuously of Colley Cibber. 'It is wonderful that a man, who for forty years had lived with the great and witty, should have acquired so ill the talents of conversation: and he had but half to furnish; for one half of what he said was oaths.' He, however, allowed considerable merit to some of his comedies, and said there was no reason to believe that the *Careless Husband* was not written by himself. Davies said, he was the first dramatic writer who introduced genteel ladies upon the stage. Johnson refuted his observation by instancing several such characters in comedies before his time. DAVIES (trying to defend himself from a charge of ignorance): 'I mean genteel moral characters.' 'I think (said Hicky) gentility and morality are inseparable.' BOSWELL: 'By no means, sir. The genteelest characters are often the most immoral. Does not Lord Chesterfield give precepts for uniting wickedness and the graces? A man, indeed, is not genteel when he gets drunk; but most vices may be committed very genteelly: a man may debauch his friend's wife genteelly: he may cheat at cards genteelly.' HICKY: 'I do not think *that* is genteel.' BOSWELL: 'Sir, it may not be like a gentleman, but it may be genteel.' JOHNSON: 'You are meaning two different things.

One means exterior grace; the other honour. It is certain that a man may be very immoral with exterior grace. Lovelace, in *Clarissa*, is a very genteel and a very wicked character. Tom Hervey, who died t'other day, though a vicious man, was one of the genteelest men that ever lived.' Tom Davies instanced Charles the Second. JOHNSON (taking fire at any attack upon that Prince, for whom he had an extraordinary partiality): 'Charles the Second was licentious in his practice; but he always had a reverence for what was good. Charles the Second knew his people, and rewarded merit. The Church was at no time better filled than in his reign. He was the best king we have had from his time till the reign of his present Majesty, except James the Second, who was a very good king, but unhappily believed that it was necessary for the salvation of his subjects that they should be Roman Catholics. *He* had the merit of endeavouring to do what he thought was for the salvation of the souls of his subjects, till he lost a great empire. *We*, who thought that we should *not* be saved if we were Roman Catholics, had the merit of maintaining our religion at the expense of submitting ourselves to the government of King William, for it could not be done otherwise,—to the government of one of the most worthless scoundrels that ever existed. No; Charles the Second was not such a man as ———,¹ (naming another king). He did not destroy his father's will. He took money, indeed, from France: but he did not betray those over whom he ruled: he did not let the French fleet pass ours. George the First knew

¹ [George the Second suppressed his father's will.—A. B.]

nothing, and desired to know nothing; did nothing, and desired to do nothing; and the only good thing that is told of him is, that he wished to restore the crown to its hereditary successor.' He roared with prodigious violence against George the Second. When he ceased, Moody interjected, in an Irish tone, and with a comic look, 'Ah! poor George the Second.'

I mentioned that Dr. Thomas Campbell had come from Ireland to London, principally to see Dr. Johnson. He seemed angry at this observation. DAVIES: 'Why, you know, sir, there came a man from Spain to see Livy;¹ and Corelli came to England to see Purcell,² and, when he heard he was dead, went directly back again to Italy.' JOHNSON: 'I should not have wished to be dead to disappoint Campbell, had he been so foolish as you represent him; but I should have wished to have been a hundred miles off.' This was apparently perverse; and I do believe it was not his real way of thinking: he could not but like a man who came so far to see him. He laughed with some complacency when I told him Campbell's odd expression to me concerning him: 'That having seen such a man was a thing to talk of a century hence,'—as if he could live so long.

We got into an argument whether the judges who went to India might with propriety engage in trade. Johnson warmly maintained that they might, 'For why (he urged) should not judges get riches, as well as those who deserve them less?' I said, they should have sufficient salaries, and have nothing to take off their attention from the affairs of the public. JOHN-

¹ Plin. *Epist.*, Lib. ii. Ep. 3.

² [Mr. Davies was here mistaken. Corelli never was in England.—B.]

son : 'No judge, sir, can give his whole attention to his office ; and it is very proper that he should employ what time he has to himself, to his own advantage, in the most profitable manner.' 'Then, sir (said Davies, who enlivened the dispute by making it somewhat dramatic), he may become an usurer ; and when he is going to the bench he may be stopped—"Your Lordship cannot go yet ; here is a bunch of invoices : several ships are about to sail."' JOHNSON : 'Sir, you may as well say a judge should not have a house ; for they may come and tell him, "Your Lordship's house is on fire" ; and so, instead of minding the business of his Court, he is to be occupied in getting the engine with the greatest speed. There is no end of this. Every judge who has land trades to a certain extent in corn or in cattle, and in the land itself undoubtedly his steward acts for him, and so do clerks for a great merchant. A judge may be a farmer ; but he is not to geld his own pigs. A judge may play a little at cards for his amusement ; but he is not to play at marbles or chuck-farthing in the Piazza. No, sir, there is no profession to which a man gives a very great proportion of his time. It is wonderful when a calculation is made, how little the mind is actually employed in the discharge of any profession. No man would be a judge upon the condition of being totally a judge. The best employed lawyer has his mind at work but for a small proportion of his time : a great deal of his occupation is merely mechanical. I once wrote for a magazine : I made a calculation that I should write but a page a day, at the same rate, I should in ten years write nine volumes in folio of an ordinary size and print.' BOSWELL : 'Such as Carte's

History?' JOHNSON: 'Yes, sir, when a man writes from his own mind, he writes very rapidly.¹ The greatest part of a writer's time is spent in reading in order to write; a man will turn over half a library to make one book.'

I argued warmly against the judges trading, and mentioned Hale as an instance of a perfect judge, who devoted himself entirely to his office. JOHNSON: 'Hale, sir, attended to other things besides law: he left a great estate.' BOSWELL: 'That was because what he got accumulated without any exertion and anxiety on his part.'

While the dispute went on, Moody once tried to say something on our side. Tom Davies clapped him on the back to encourage him. Beauclerk, to whom I mentioned this circumstance, said, 'that he could not conceive a more humiliating situation than to be clapped on the back by Tom Davies.'

We spoke of Rolt, to whose *Dictionary of Commerce* Dr. Johnson wrote the Preface. JOHNSON: 'Old Gardner the bookseller employed Rolt and Smart to write a monthly miscellany called *The Universal Visitor*. There was a formal written contract which Allen the printer saw. Gardner thought as you do of the judge. They were bound to write nothing else; they were to have, I think, a third of the profits of his sixpenny pamphlet; and the contract was for ninety-nine years. I wish I had thought of giving this to Thurlow in the cause about Literary Property. What an excellent instance would it have been of the oppression of book-

¹ Johnson certainly did, who had a mind stored with knowledge, and teeming with imagery, but the observation is not applicable to writers in general.

sellers towards poor authors !'¹ (smiling.) Davies, zealous for the honour of *the Trade*, said, Gardner was not properly a bookseller. JOHNSON: 'Nay, sir, he certainly was a bookseller. He had served his time regularly, was a member of the Stationers' company, kept a shop in the face of mankind, purchased copy-right, and was a *bibliopole*, sir, in every sense. I wrote for some months in the *Universal Visitor* for poor Smart while he was mad, not then knowing the terms on which he was engaged to write, and thinking I was doing him good. I hoped his wits would soon return to him. Mine returned to me, and I wrote in the *Universal Visitor* no longer.'

Friday, April 7, I dined with him at a tavern, with a numerous company. JOHNSON: 'I have been reading Twiss's *Travels in Spain*, which are just come out. They are as good as the first book of travels that you will take up. They are as good as those of Keysler or Blainville: nay, as Addison's,² if you except the learning. They are not so good as Brydone's, but they are better than Pococke's. I have not, indeed, cut the leaves yet; but I have read in them where the pages are open, and I do not suppose that what is in the pages which are closed is worse than what is in the open pages. It would seem (he added) that Addison

¹ There has probably been some mistake as to the terms of this supposed extraordinary contract, the recital of which from hearsay afforded Johnson so much play for his sportive acuteness. Or if it was worded as he supposed, it is so strange that I should conclude it was a joke. Mr. Gardner, I am assured, was a worthy and liberal man.

² [Speaking of Addison's *Remarks on Italy* in the *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides* (p. 323, 3rd edit.), he says, 'It is a tedious book, and if it were not attached to Addison's previous reputation, one would not think much of it. Had he written nothing else, his name would not have lived. Addison does not seem to have gone deep into Italian literature: he shows nothing of it in his subsequent writings. He shows a great deal of French learning.'—M.]

had not acquired much Italian learning, for we do not find it introduced into his writings. The only instance that I recollect is his quoting "*Stavo bene; per star meglio, sto qui.*"¹

I mentioned Addison's having borrowed many of his classical remarks from Leandro Alberti. Mr. Beauclerk said, 'It was alleged that he had borrowed also from another Italian author.' JOHNSON: 'Why, sir, all who go to look for what the classics have said of Italy must find the same passages;² and I should think it would be one of the first things the Italians would do on the revival of learning to collect all that the Roman authors have said of their country.'

Ossian being mentioned—JOHNSON: 'Supposing the Irish and Erse languages to be the same, which I do not believe, yet as there is no reason to suppose that the inhabitants of the Highlands and Hebrides ever wrote their native language, it is not to be credited that a long poem was preserved among them. If we had no evidence of the art of writing being practised in one of the counties of England, we should not believe that a long poem was preserved *there*, though in the neighbouring counties where the same language was spoken, the inhabitants could write.' BEAUCLERK: 'The ballad of 'Lilliburlero' was once in the mouths of all the people of this country, and is said to have had a great effect in bringing about the Revolution. Yet I question whether anybody can repeat it now, which shows how improbable it is that much poetry should be preserved by tradition.'

¹ [Addison, however, does not mention where this celebrated epitaph, which has eluded a very diligent inquiry, is found.—M.]

² ['But if you find the same *applications* in another book, then Addison's learning falls to the ground.'—*Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides, ut supra.*—M.]

One of the company suggested an internal objection to the antiquity of the poetry said to be Ossian's, that we do not find the wolf in it, which must have been the case had it been of that age.

The mention of the wolf had led Johnson to think of other wild beasts ; and while Sir Joshua Reynolds and Mr. Langton were carrying on a dialogue about something which engaged them earnestly, he, in the midst of it, broke out, 'Pennant tells of bears——' [what he added I have forgotten]. They went on, which he being dull of hearing did not perceive, or, if he did, was not willing to break off his talk ; so he continued to vociferate his remarks, and *bear* ('like a word in a catch,' as Beauclerk said) was repeatedly heard at intervals, which coming from him who, by those who did not know him, had been so often assimilated to that ferocious animal, while we who were sitting around could hardly stifle laughter, produced a very ludicrous effect. Silence having ensued, he proceeded : 'We are told that the black bear is innocent ; but I should not like to trust myself with him.' Mr. Gibbon muttered, in a low tone of voice, 'I should not like to trust myself with *you*.' This piece of sarcastic pleasantry was a prudent resolution, if applied to a competition of abilities.

Patriotism having become one of our topics, Johnson suddenly uttered, in a strong, determined tone, an apophthegm, at which many will start : 'Patriotism is the last refuge of a scoundrel.' But let it be considered that he did not mean a real and generous love of our country, but that pretended patriotism which so many, in all ages and countries, have made a cloak for self-interest. I maintained that certainly all patriots

were not scoundrels. Being urged (not by Johnson), to name one exception, I mentioned an eminent person whom we all greatly admired. JOHNSON: 'Sir, I do not say that he is *not* honest; but we have no reason to conclude from his political conduct that he *is* honest. Were he to accept a place from this ministry, he would lose that character of firmness which he has, and might be turned out of his place in a year. This ministry is neither stable nor grateful to their friends, as Sir Robert Walpole was: so that he may think it more for his interest to take his chance of his party coming in.'

Mrs. Pritchard being mentioned, he said, 'Her playing was quite mechanical. It is wonderful how little mind she had. Sir, she had never read the tragedy of Macbeth all through. She no more thought of the play out of which her part was taken, than a shoemaker thinks of the skin, out of which the piece of leather, of which he is making a pair of shoes, is cut.'

On Saturday, April 8, I dined with him at Mr. Thrale's, where we met the Irish Dr. Campbell. Johnson had supped the night before at Mrs. Abington's with some fashionable people whom he named; and he seemed much pleased with having made one in so elegant a circle. Nor did he omit to pique his *mistress* a little with jealousy of her housewifery; for he said (with a smile), 'Mrs. Abington's jelly, my dear lady, was better than yours.'

Mrs. Thrale, who frequently practised a coarse mode of flattery, by repeating his *bon-mots* in his hearing, told us that he had said, a certain celebrated actor was just fit to stand at the door of an auction-

room with a long pole, and cry, 'Pray, gentlemen, walk in'; and that a certain author, upon hearing this, had said, that another still more celebrated actor was fit for nothing better than that, and would pick your pocket after you came out. JOHNSON: 'Nay, my dear lady, there is no wit in what our friend added: there is only abuse. You may as well say of any man that he will pick a pocket. Besides, the man who is stationed at the door does not pick people's pockets; that is done within by the auctioneer.'

Mrs. Thrale told us that Tom Davies repeated, in a very bald manner, the story of Dr. Johnson's first repartee to me, which I have related exactly.¹ He made me say, '*I was born in Scotland*,' instead of '*I come from Scotland*'; so that Johnson's saying, 'That, sir, is what a great many of your countrymen cannot help,' had no point, or even meaning: and that upon this being mentioned to Mr. Fitzherbert, he observed, 'It is not every man that can *carry a bon mot*.'

On Monday, April 10, I dined with him at General Oglethorpe's, with Mr. Langton and the Irish Dr. Campbell, whom the General had obligingly given me leave to bring with me. This learned gentleman was thus gratified with a very high intellectual feast, by not only being in company with Dr. Johnson, but with General Oglethorpe, who had been so long a celebrated name both at home and abroad.²

¹ P. 58, vol. ii.

² Let me here be allowed to pay my tribute of most sincere gratitude to the memory of that excellent person, my intimacy with whom was the more valuable to me, because my first acquaintance with him was unexpected and unsolicited. Soon after the publication of my *Account of Corsica*, he did me the honour to call on me, and approaching me with a frank, courteous air, said, 'My name, sir, is Oglethorpe, and I wish to be acquainted with you.' I was not a little flattered to be thus

I must, again and again, entreat of my readers not to suppose that my imperfect record of conversation contains the whole of what was said by Johnson or other eminent persons who lived with him. What I have preserved, however, has the value of the most perfect authenticity.

He this day enlarged upon Pope's melancholy remark,

‘Man never *is*, but always *to be* blest.’

He asserted that *the present* was never a happy state to any human being; but that, as every part of life, of which we are conscious, was at some point of time a period yet to come, in which felicity was expected, there was some happiness produced by hope. Being pressed upon this subject, and asked if he really was of opinion that though in general happiness was very rare in human life, a man was not sometimes happy in the moment that was present, he answered, ‘Never but when he is drunk.’

He urged General Oglethorpe to give the world his life. He said, ‘I know no man whose life would be more interesting. If I were furnished with materials, I should be very glad to write it.’¹

addressed by an eminent man, of whom I had read in Pope, from my early years :

‘Or, driven by strong benevolence of soul,
Will fly, like Oglethorpe, from pole to pole.’

I was fortunate enough to be found worthy of his good opinion, inso-much, that I not only was invited to make one in the many respectable companies whom he entertained at his table, but had a cover at his hospitable board every day when I happened to be disengaged; and in his society I never failed to enjoy learned and animated conversation, seasoned with genuine sentiments of virtue and religion.

¹ The General seemed unwilling to enter upon it at this time; but upon a subsequent occasion he communicated to me a number of particulars, which I have committed to writing; but I was not sufficiently diligent in obtaining more from him, not apprehending that his friends were so soon to lose him; for notwithstanding his great age, he was very healthy and vigorous, and was at last carried off by a violent fever, which is often fatal at any period of life.

Mr. Scott of Amwell's *Elegies* were lying in the room. Dr. Johnson observed, 'They are very well; but such as twenty people might write.' Upon this I took occasion to controvert Horace's maxim,

'mediocribus esse poetis

Don Dî, non homines, non concessere columnæ,'¹

for here (I observed), was a very middle-rate poet, who pleased many readers, and therefore poetry of a middle sort was entitled to some esteem; nor could I see why poetry should not, like everything else, have different gradations of excellence, and consequently of value. Johnson repeated the common remark, that 'as there is no necessity for our having poetry at all, it being merely a luxury, an instrument of pleasure, it can have no value, unless when exquisite in its kind.' I declared myself not satisfied. 'Why then, sir (said he), Horace and you must settle it.' He was not much in the humour of talking.

No more of his conversation for some days appears in my journal, except that when a gentleman told him he had bought a suit of lace for his lady, he said, 'Well, sir, you have done a good thing and a wise thing.' 'I have done a good thing (said the gentleman), but I do not know that I have done a wise thing.' JOHNSON: 'Yes, sir; no money is better spent than what is laid out for domestic satisfaction. A man is pleased that his wife is dressed as well as other people; and a wife is pleased that she is dressed.'

On Friday, April 14, being Good Friday, I repaired to him in the morning, according to my usual custom on that day, and breakfasted with him. I observed

¹ *De Art. Poet.* 372.

that he fasted so very strictly, that he did not even taste bread, and took no milk with his tea ; I suppose because it is a kind of animal food.

He entered upon the state of the nation, and thus discoursed : ‘ Sir, the great misfortune now is, that government has too little power. All that it has to bestow must of necessity be given to support itself : so that it cannot reward merit. No man, for instance, can now be made a bishop for his learning and piety ;¹ his only chance for promotion is his being connected with somebody who has parliamentary interest. Our several ministers in this reign have out-bid each other in concessions to the people. Lord Bute, though a very honourable man,—a man who meant well,—a man who had his blood full of prerogative,—was a theoretical statesman,—a book minister,—and thought this country could be governed by the influence of the Crown alone. Then, sir, he gave up a great deal. He advised the King to agree that the judges should hold their places for life, instead of losing them at the accession of a new King. Lord Bute, I suppose, thought to make the King popular by his concession ; but the people never minded it ; and it was a most impolitic measure. There is no reason why a judge should hold his office for life, more than any other person in public trust. A judge may be partial otherwise than to the Crown : we have seen judges partial to the populace. A judge may become corrupt, and yet there may not be legal evidence against him. A judge may become froward from age. A judge may grow unfit for his office in many ways. It was desirable that there should be a possibility of being

¹ From this too just observation there are some eminent exceptions.

delivered from him by a new King. That is now gone by an Act of Parliament *ex gratiâ* of the Crown. Lord Bute advised the King to give up a very large sum of money,¹ for which nobody thanked him. It was of consequence to the King, but nothing to the public, among whom it was divided. When I say Lord Bute advised, I mean that such acts were done when he was minister, and we are to suppose that he advised them. Lord Bute showed an undue partiality to Scotchmen. He turned out Dr. Nichols, a very eminent man, from being physician to the King, to make room for one of his countrymen, a man very low in his profession. He had ——— and ——— to go on errands for him. He had occasion for people to go on errands for him, but he should not have had Scotchmen; and certainly he should not have suffered them to have access to him before the first people in England.'

I told him that the admission of one of them before the first people of England, which had given the greatest offence, was no more than what happens at every minister's levee, where those who attend are admitted in the order that they have come, which is better than admitting them according to their rank; for if that were to be the rule, a man who has waited

¹ The money arising from the property of the prizes taken before the declaration of war, which were given to his Majesty by the peace of Paris, and amounted to upwards of £700,000, and from the lands in the ceded islands, which were estimated at £200,000 more. Surely there was a noble munificence in this gift from a Monarch to his people. And let it be remembered, that during the Earl of Bute's administration, the King was graciously pleased to give up the hereditary revenues of the Crown, and to accept, instead of them, of the limited sum of £800,000 a year: upon which Blackstone observes that 'The hereditary revenues, being put under the same management as the other branches of the public patrimony, will produce more, and be better collected than heretofore; and the public is a gainer of upwards of £100,000 per annum, by the disinterested bounty of his Majesty.'—Book i. chap. viii. p. 330.

all the morning might have the mortification to see a peer, newly come, go in before him, and keep him waiting still. JOHNSON: 'True, sir: but — should not have come to the levee, to be in the way of people of consequence. He saw Lord Bute at all times; and could have said what he had to say at any time, as well as at the levee. There is now no Prime Minister: there is only an agent for government in the House of Commons. We are governed by the Cabinet; but there is no one head there since Sir Robert Walpole's time.' BOSWELL: 'What then, sir, is the use of Parliament?' JOHNSON: 'Why, sir, Parliament is a large council to the King; and the advantage of such a council is, having a great number of men of property concerned in the legislature, who, for their own interest, will not consent to bad laws. And you must have observed, sir, the administration is feeble and timid, and cannot act with that authority and resolution which is necessary. Were I in power, I would turn out every man who dared to oppose me. Government has the distribution of offices, that it may be enabled to maintain its authority.'

'Lord Bute (he added) took down too fast, without building up something new.' BOSWELL: 'Because, sir, he found a rotten building. The political coach was drawn by a set of bad horses; it was necessary to change them.' JOHNSON: 'But he should have changed them one by one.'

I told him that I had been informed by Mr. Orme that many parts of the East Indies were better mapped than the Highlands of Scotland. JOHNSON: 'That a country may be mapped, it must be travelled over.' 'Nay (said I, meaning to laugh with him at

one of his prejudices), can't you say, it is not *worth* mapping?'

As we walked to St. Clement's Church, and saw several shops open upon this most solemn fast-day of the Christian world, I remarked that one disadvantage arising from the immensity of London, was that nobody was heeded by his neighbour; there was no fear of censure for not observing Good Friday, as it ought to be kept, and as it is kept in country towns. He said it was, upon the whole, very well observed even in London. He however owned that London was too large; but added, 'It is nonsense to say the head is too big for the body. It would be as much too big though the body were ever so large; that is to say, though the country were ever so extensive. It has no similarity to a head connected with a body.'

Dr. Wetherell, Master of University College, Oxford, accompanied us home from church; and after he was gone, there came two other gentlemen, one of whom uttered the commonplace complaints, that by the increase of taxes, labour would be dear, other nations would undersell us, and our commerce would be ruined. JOHNSON (smiling): 'Never fear, sir. Our commerce is in a very good state; and suppose we had no commerce at all, we could live very well on the produce of our own country.' I cannot omit to mention that I never knew any man who was less disposed to be querulous than Johnson. Whether the subject was his own situation, or the state of the public, or the state of human nature in general, though he saw the evils, his mind was turned to resolution, and never to whining or complaint.

We went again to St. Clement's in the afternoon. He had found fault with the preacher in the morning for not choosing a text adapted to the day. The preacher in the afternoon had chosen one extremely proper : 'It is finished.'

After the evening service, he said, 'Come, you shall go home with me and sit just an hour.' But he was better than his word ; for after we had drunk tea with Mrs. Williams, he asked me to go up to his study with him, where we sat a long while together in a serene, undisturbed frame of mind, sometimes in silence, and sometimes conversing, as we felt ourselves inclined, or more properly speaking, as *he* was inclined ; for during all the course of my long intimacy with him, my respectful attention never abated, and my wish to hear him was such that I constantly watched every dawning of communication from that great and illuminated mind.

He observed, 'All knowledge is of itself of some value. There is nothing so minute or inconsiderable that I would not rather know it than not. In the same manner, all power, of whatever sort, is of itself desirable. A man would not submit to learn to hem a ruffle of his wife or his wife's maid ; but if a mere wish could attain it he would rather wish to be able to hem a ruffle.'

He again advised me to keep a journal fully and minutely, but not to mention such trifles as, that meat was too much or too little done, or that the weather was fair or rainy. He had, till very near his death, a contempt for the notion that the weather affects the human frame.

I told him that our friend Goldsmith had said to

me that he had come too late into the world, for that Pope and other poets had taken up the places in the Temple of Fame; so that as but few at any period can possess poetical reputation, a man of genius can now hardly acquire it. JOHNSON: 'That is one of the most sensible things I have ever heard of Goldsmith. It is difficult to get literary fame, and it is every day growing more difficult. Ah, sir, that should make a man think of securing happiness in another world, which all who try sincerely for it may attain. In comparison of that, how little are all other things! The belief of immortality is impressed upon all men, and all men act under an impression of it, however they may talk, and though, perhaps, they may be scarcely sensible of it.' I said it appeared to me that some people had not the least notion of immortality; and I mentioned a distinguished gentleman of our acquaintance. JOHNSON: 'Sir, if it were not for the notion of immortality he would cut a throat to fill his pockets.' When I quoted this to Beauclerk, who knew much more of the gentleman than we did, he said, in his acid manner, 'He would cut a throat to fill his pockets if it were not for fear of being hanged.'

Dr. Johnson proceeded: 'Sir, there is a great cry about infidelity; but there are in reality very few infidels. I have heard a person, originally a Quaker, but now, I am afraid, a Deist, say that he did not believe there were, in all England, above two hundred infidels.'

He was pleased to say, 'If you come to settle here, we will have one day in the week on which we will meet by ourselves. That is the happiest conversation

where there is no competition, no vanity, but a calm, quiet interchange of sentiments.' In his private register this evening is thus marked: 'Boswell sat with me till night; we had some serious talk.'¹ It also appears from the same record that after I left him he was occupied in religious duties in 'giving Francis his servant some directions for preparation to communicate; in reviewing his life, and resolving on better conduct.' The humility and piety which he discovers on such occasions is truly edifying. No saint, however, in the course of his religious warfare, was more sensible of the unhappy failure of pious resolves than Johnson. He said one day, talking to an acquaintance on this subject, 'Sir, hell is paved with good intentions.'²

On Sunday, April 16, being Easter Day, after having attended the solemn service at St. Paul's, I dined with Dr. Johnson and Mrs. Williams. I maintained that Horace was wrong in placing happiness in *Nil admirari*, for that I thought admiration one of the most agreeable of all our feelings; and I regretted that I had lost much of my disposition to admire, which people generally do as they advance in life. JOHNSON: 'Sir, as a man advances in life he gets what is better than admiration—judgment—to estimate things at their true value.' I still insisted that admiration was more pleasing than judgment, as love is more pleasing than friendship. The feeling of friendship is like that of being comfortably filled with roast beef; love, like being enlivened with champagne. JOHNSON: 'No,

¹ *Prayers and Meditations*, p. 138.

² [This is a proverbial sentence. 'Hell (says Herbert) is full of good meanings and wishings.'—*Jacula Prudentum*, p. 11, edit. 1651.—M.]

sir ; admiration and love are like being intoxicated with champagne ; judgment and friendship like being enlivened. Waller has hit upon the same thought with you :¹ but I don't believe you have borrowed from Waller. I wish you would enable yourself to borrow more.'

He then took occasion to enlarge on the advantages of reading, and combated the idle superficial notion that knowledge enough may be acquired in conversation. 'The foundation (said he) must be laid by reading. General principles must be had from books, which, however, must be brought to the test of real life. In conversation you never get a system. What is said upon a subject is to be gathered from a hundred people. The parts of a truth which a man gets thus are at such a distance from each other that he never attains to a full view.'

TO BENNET LANGTON, ESQ.

'DEAR SIR,—I have inquired more minutely about the medicine for the rheumatism, which I am sorry to hear that you still want. The receipt is this :

'Take equal quantities of flour of sulphur, and *flour* of mustard-seed, make them an electuary with honey or treacle ; and take a bolus as big as a nutmeg several times a day, as you can bear it, drinking after it a quarter of a pint of the infusion of the root of Lovage.

¹ 'Amoret ! as sweet and good
As the most delicious food ;
Which but tasted does impart
Life and gladness to the heart.

Sacharissa's beauty's wine,
Which to madness does incline ;
Such a liquor as no brain
That is mortal can sustain.

‘Lovage, in Ray’s *Nomenclature*, is *Levisticum*: perhaps the botanists may know the Latin name.

‘Of this medicine I pretend not to judge. There is all the appearance of its efficacy, which a single instance can afford: the patient was very old, the pain very violent, and the relief, I think, speedy and lasting.

‘My opinion of alterative medicine is not high, but *quid tentasse nocebit?* if it does harm, or does no good, it may be omitted; but that it may do good,’ you have, I hope, reason to think is desired by, sir, your most affectionate, humble servant,

SAM. JOHNSON.

‘April 17, 1775.’

On Tuesday, April 11, he and I were engaged to go with Sir Joshua Reynolds to dine with Mr. Cambridge, at his beautiful villa on the banks of the Thames, near Twickenham. Dr. Johnson’s tardiness was such, that Sir Joshua, who had an appointment at Richmond, early in the day, was obliged to go by himself on horseback, leaving his coach to Johnson and me. Johnson was in such good spirits, that everything seemed to please him as we drove along.

Our conversation turned on a variety of subjects. He thought portrait-painting an improper employment for a woman. ‘Public practice of any art (he observed),’ and staring in men’s faces, is very indelicate in a female.’ I happened to start a question, whether when a man knows that some of his intimate friends are invited to the house of another friend, with whom they are all equally intimate, he may join them without an invitation. JOHNSON: ‘No, sir; he is not to go when he is not invited. They may be invited on purpose to abuse him’ (smiling).

As a curious instance how little a man knows, or wishes to know, his own character in the world, or

rather as a convincing proof that Johnson's roughness was only external, and did not proceed from his heart, I insert the following dialogue. JOHNSON: 'It is wonderful, sir, how rare a quality good-humour is in life. We meet with very few good-humoured men.' I mentioned four of our friends, none of whom he would allow to be good-humoured. One was *acid*, another was *muddy*, and to the others he had objections which have escaped me. Then shaking his head and stretching himself at ease in the coach, and smiling with much complacency, he turned to me and said, 'I look upon *myself* as a good-humoured fellow.' The epithet *fellow*, applied to the great lexicographer, the stately moralist, the masterly critic, as if he had been *Sam Johnson*, a mere pleasant companion, was highly diverting; and this light notion of himself struck me with wonder. I answered, also smiling, 'No, no, sir; that will *not* do. You are good-natured, but not good-humoured: you are irascible. You have not patience with folly and absurdity. I believe you would pardon them if there were time to deprecate your vengeance; but punishment follows so quick after sentence that they cannot escape.'

I had brought with me a great bundle of Scotch magazines and newspapers, in which his *Journey to the Western Islands* was attacked in every mode; and I read a great part of them to him, knowing they would afford him entertainment. I wish the writers of them had been present: they would have been sufficiently vexed. One ludicrous imitation of his style, by Mr. Maclaurin, now one of the Scotch Judges, with the title of Lord Dreghorn, was distinguished by him from the rude mass. 'This (said he) is the best. But

I could caricature my own style much better myself.' He defended his remark upon the general insufficiency of education in Scotland; and confirmed to me the authenticity of his witty saying on the learning of the Scotch;—'Their learning is like bread in a besieged town: every man gets a little, but no man gets a full meal.' 'There is (said he) in Scotland a diffusion of learning, a certain portion of it widely and thinly spread. A merchant has as much learning as one of their clergy.'

He talked of Isaac Walton's *Lives*, which was one of his most favourite books. Dr. Donne's *Life*, he said, was the most perfect of them. He observed that 'it was wonderful that Walton, who was in a very low situation in life, should have been familiarly received by so many great men, and that at a time when the ranks of society were kept more separate than they are now.' He supposed that Walton had then given up his business as a linen-draper and sempster, and was only an author,¹ and added, 'that he was a great panegyrist.' BOSWELL: 'No quality will get a man more friends than a disposition to admire the qualities of others. I do not mean flattery, but a sincere admiration.' JOHNSON: 'Nay, sir, flattery pleases very generally. In the first place, the flatterer may think what he says to be true: but, in the second place, whether he thinks so or not, he certainly thinks those whom he flatters of consequence enough to be flattered.'

No sooner had we made our bow to Mr. Cambridge, in his library, than Johnson ran eagerly to one side

¹ [Johnson's conjecture was erroneous. Walton did not retire from business till 1643. But in 1664, Dr. King, bishop of Chichester, in a letter prefixed to his *Lives*, mentions his having been familiarly acquainted with him for forty years: and in 1631 he was so intimate with Dr. Donne, that he was one of the friends who attended him on his deathbed.—J. B.—O.]

of the room, intent on poring over the backs of the books.¹ Sir Joshua observed (aside), ‘He runs to the books as I do to the pictures : but I have the advantage. I can see much more of the pictures than he can of the books.’ Mr. Cambridge, upon this, politely said, ‘Dr. Johnson, I am going, with your pardon, to accuse myself, for I have the same custom which I perceive you have. But it seems odd that one should have such a desire to look at the backs of books.’ Johnson, ever ready for contest, instantly started from his reverie, wheeled about and answered, ‘Sir, the reason is very plain. Knowledge is of two kinds. We know a subject ourselves, or we know where we can find information upon it. When we inquire into any subject, the first thing we have to do is to know what books have treated of it. This leads us to look at catalogues, and the backs of books in libraries.’ Sir Joshua observed to me the extraordinary promptitude with which Johnson flew upon an argument. ‘Yes (said I), he has no formal preparation, no flourishing with his sword ; he is through your body in an instant.’

Johnson was here solaced with an elegant entertainment, a very accomplished family, and much good company ; among whom was Mr. Harris of Salisbury, who paid him many compliments on his *Journey to the Western Islands*.

The common remark as to the utility of reading history being made ;—JOHNSON : ‘We must consider

¹ [The first time he dined with me he was shown into my book-room, and instantly pored over the lettering of each volume within his reach. My collection of books is very miscellaneous, and I feared there might be some among them that he would not like. But seeing the number of volumes very considerable, he said, ‘You are an honest man, to have formed so great an accumulation of knowledge.’—BURNBY.]

how very little history there is ; I mean real authentic history. That certain kings reigned, and certain battles were fought, we can depend upon as true ; but all the colouring, all the philosophy, of history is conjecture.' BOSWELL : ' Then, sir, you would reduce all history to no better than an almanac, a mere chronological series of remarkable events.' Mr. Gibbon, who must at that time have been employed upon his History, of which he published the first volume in the following year, was present, but did not step forth in defence of that species of writing. He probably did not like to *trust* himself with Johnson !¹

Johnson observed that the force of our early habits was so great, that though reason approved, nay, though our senses relished a different course, almost every man returned to them. I do not believe there is any observation upon human nature better founded than this ; and in many cases, it is a very painful truth ; for where early habits have been mean and wretched, the joy and elevation resulting from better modes of life must be damped by the gloomy consciousness of being under an almost inevitable doom to sink back into a situation which we recollect with disgust. It surely may be prevented by constant attention and unremitting exertion to establish contrary habits of superior efficacy.

The Beggar's Opera, and the common question whether it was pernicious in its effects, having been introduced ;—JOHNSON : ' As to this matter, which has been very much contested, I myself am of opinion that more influence has been ascribed to *The Beggar's*

¹ See p. 195.

Opera than it in reality ever had ; for I do not believe that any man was ever made a rogue by being present at its representation. At the same time, I do not deny that it may have some influence, by making the character of a rogue familiar, and in some degree pleasing.'¹ Then collecting himself, as it were, to give a heavy stroke : 'There is in it such a *labefaction* of all principles as may be injurious to morality.'

While he pronounced this response, we sat in a comical sort of restraint, smothering a laugh, which we were afraid might burst out. In his life of Gay he has been still more decisive as to the inefficiency of *The Beggar's Opera* in corrupting society. But I have ever thought somewhat differently ; for, indeed, not only are the gaiety and heroism of a highwayman very captivating to a youthful imagination, but the arguments for adventurous depredation are so plausible, the allusions so lively, and the contrasts with the ordinary and more painful modes of acquiring property are so artfully displayed, that it requires a cool and strong judgment to resist so imposing an aggregate : yet, I own, I should be very sorry to have *The Beggar's Opera* suppressed ; for there is in it so much of real London life, so much brilliant wit, and such a variety of airs, which, from early association of ideas,

¹ A very eminent physician, whose discernment is as acute and penetrating in judging of the human character as it is in his own profession, remarked once at a club where I was, that a lively young man, fond of pleasure, and without money, would hardly resist a solicitation from his mistress to go upon the highway immediately after being present at the representation of *The Beggar's Opera*. I have been told of an ingenious observation of Mr. Gibbon, that '*The Beggar's Opera* may, perhaps, have sometimes increased the number of highwaymen : but that it has had a beneficial effect in refining that class of men, making them less ferocious, more polite,—in short, more like gentlemen.' Upon this Mr. Courtenay said, that 'Gay was the Orpheus of highwaymen.'

engage, soothe, and enliven the mind, that no performance which the theatre exhibits delights me more.

The late '*worthy*' Duke of Queensberry, as Thomson, in his *Seasons*, justly characterises him, told me that when Gay showed him *The Beggar's Opera* his Grace's observation was, 'This is a very odd thing, Gay; I am satisfied that it is either a very good thing, or a very bad thing.' It proved the former, beyond the warmest expectations of the author or his friends. Mr. Cambridge, however, showed us to-day that there was good reason enough to doubt concerning its success. He was told by Quin that during the first night of its appearance it was long in a very dubious state; that there was a disposition to damn it, and that it was saved by the song,

'Oh ponder well! be not severe!'

the audience being much affected by the innocent looks of Polly, when she came to those two lines, which exhibit at once a painful and ridiculous image,

'For on the rope that hangs my Dear,
Depends poor Polly's life.'

Quin himself had so bad an opinion of it, that he refused the part of Captain Macheath, and gave it to Walker, who acquired great celebrity by his grave yet animated performance of it.

We talked of a young gentleman's marriage with an eminent singer, and his determination that she should no longer sing in public, though his father was very earnest she should, because her talents would be liberally rewarded, so as to make her a good fortune. It was questioned whether the young gentleman, who had not a shilling in the world, but was blest with

very uncommon talents, was not foolishly delicate, or foolishly proud, and his father truly rational without being mean. Johnson, with all the high spirit of a Roman senator, exclaimed, 'He resolved wisely and nobly, to be sure. He is a brave man. Would not a gentleman be disgraced by having his wife singing publicly for hire? No, sir, there can be no doubt here. I know not if I should not *prepare* myself for a public singer as readily as let my wife be one.'

Johnson arraigned the modern politics of this country as entirely devoid of all principle of whatever kind. 'Politics (said he) are now nothing more than means of rising in the world. With this sole view do men engage in politics, and their whole conduct proceeds upon it. How different in that respect is the state of the nation now from what it was in the time of Charles the First, during the Usurpation, and after the Restoration, in the time of Charles the Second. Hudibras affords a strong proof how much hold political principles had then upon the minds of men. There is in Hudibras a great deal of bullion which will always last. But to be sure the brightest strokes of his wit owed their force to the impression of the characters, which was upon men's mind at the time; to their knowing them, at table and in the street; in short, being familiar with them; and above all, to his satire being directed against those whom a little while before they had hated and feared. The nation in general has ever been loyal, has been at all times attached to the monarch, though a few daring rebels have been wonderfully powerful for a time. The murder of Charles the First was undoubtedly not committed with the approbation or consent of the

people. Had that been the case Parliament would not have ventured to consign the regicides to their deserved punishment. And we know what exuberance of joy there was when Charles the Second was restored. If Charles the Second had bent all his mind to it, had made it his sole object, he might have been as absolute as Louis the Fourteenth.' A gentleman observed he would have done no harm if he had. JOHNSON: 'Why, sir, absolute princes seldom do any harm. But they who are governed by them are governed by chance. There is no security for good government.' CAMBRIDGE: 'There have been many sad victims to absolute government.' JOHNSON: 'So, sir, have there been to popular factions.' BOSWELL: 'The question is, which is worst, one wild beast or many?'

Johnson praised *The Spectator*, particularly the character of Sir Roger de Coverley. He said: 'Sir Roger did not die a violent death, as has been generally fancied. He was not killed; he died only because others were to die, and because his death afforded an opportunity to Addison for some very fine writing. We have an example of Cervantes making Don Quixote die. I never could see why Sir Roger is represented as a little cracked. It appears to me that the story of the widow was intended to have something superinduced upon it; but the superstructure did not come.'

Somebody found fault with writing verses in a dead language, maintaining that they were merely arrangements of so many words, and laughed at the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge for sending forth collections of them, not only in Greek and Latin, but

even in Syriac, Arabic, and other more unknown tongues. JOHNSON: 'I would have as many of these as possible; I would have verses in every language that there are the means of acquiring. Nobody imagines that an University is to have at once two hundred poets; but it should be able to show two hundred scholars. Pieresc's death was lamented, I think, in forty languages. And I would have at every coronation, and every death of a king, every *Gaudium*, and every *Luctus*, University-verses, in as many languages as can be acquired. I would have the world to be thus told, "Here is a school where everything may be learnt."' "

Having set out next day on a visit to the Earl of Pembroke, at Wilton, and to my friend, Mr. Temple,¹ at Mamhead, in Devonshire, and not having returned to town till the 2nd of May, I did not see Dr. Johnson for a considerable time, and during the remaining part of my stay in London kept very imperfect notes of his conversation, which had I, according to my usual custom, written out at large soon after the time, much might have been preserved, which is now irretrievably lost. I can now only record some particular scenes, and a few fragments of his *memorabilia*. But to make some amends for my relaxation of diligence in one respect, I have to present my readers with arguments upon two law cases with which he favoured me.

On Saturday, the 6th of May, we dined by ourselves at the Mitre, and he dictated to me what follows, to obviate the complaint already mentioned,² which had been made in the form of an action in the Court of

¹ Page 168.

² Page 144.

Session, by Dr. Memis of Aberdeen, that in the same translation of a charter in which *physicians* were mentioned, he was called *Doctor of Medicine* :

‘There are but two reasons for which a physician can decline the title of *Doctor of Medicine*, because he supposes himself disgraced by the doctorship, or supposes the doctorship disgraced by himself. To be disgraced by a title which he shares in common with every illustrious name of his profession, with Boerhaave, with Arbuthnot, and with Cullen, can surely diminish no man’s reputation. It is, I suppose, to the doctorate, from which he shrinks, that he owes his right of practising physic. A doctor of medicine is a physician under the protection of the laws, and by the stamp of authority. The physician who is not a doctor usurps a profession, and is authorised only by himself to decide upon health and sickness, and life and death. That this gentleman is a doctor his diploma makes evident ; a diploma not obtruded upon him, but obtained by solicitation, and for which fees were paid. With what countenance any man can refuse the title which he has either begged or bought is not easily discovered.

‘All verbal injury must comprise in it either some false position, or some unnecessary declaration of defamatory truth. That in calling him doctor a false appellation was given him he himself will not pretend, who at the same time that he complains of the title would be offended if we supposed him to be not a doctor. If the title of Doctor be a defamatory truth, it is time to dissolve our colleges ; for why should the public give salaries to men whose approbation is reproach ? It may likewise deserve the notice of the public to consider what help can be given to the professors of physic, who all share with this unhappy gentleman the ignominious appellation, and of whom the very boys in the street are not afraid to say, *There goes the Doctor*.

‘What is implied by the term Doctor is well known. It distinguishes him to whom it is granted, as a man who has attained such knowledge of his profession as qualifies him to instruct others. A Doctor of Laws is a man who can form lawyers by his precepts. A Doctor of Medicine is a man who can teach the art of curing diseases. This is an old axiom

which no man has yet thought fit to deny, *Nil dat quod non habet*. Upon this principle to be doctor implies skill, for *nemo docet quod non didicit*. In England, whoever practises physic, not being a doctor, must practise by a licence : but the doctorate conveys a licence in itself.

‘By what accident it happened that he and the other physicians were mentioned in different terms, where the terms themselves were equivalent, or where in effect that which was applied to him was the most honourable, perhaps they who wrote the paper cannot now remember. Had they expected a lawsuit to have been the consequence of such petty variation, I hope they would have avoided it.¹ But probably, as they meant no ill, they suspected no danger, and therefore consulted only what appeared to them propriety or convenience.’

A few days afterwards I consulted him upon a cause, *Paterson and Others* against *Alexander and Others*, which had been decided by a casting vote in the Court of Session, determining that the Corporation of Stirling was corrupt, and setting aside the election of some of their officers, because it was proved that three of the leading men who influenced the majority had entered into an unjustifiable compact, of which, however, the majority were ignorant. He dictated to me, after a little consideration, the following sentences upon the subject :

‘There is a difference between majority and superiority ; majority is applied to number, and superiority to power ; and power, like many other things, is to be estimated *non numero sed pondere*. Now though the greater *number* is not corrupt, the greater *weight* is corrupt, so that corruption predominates in the borough, taken *collectively*, though, perhaps, taken *numerically*, the greater part may be uncorrupt. That

¹ In justice to Dr. Memis, though I was against him as an advocate, I must mention that he objected to the variation very earnestly before the translation was printed off.

borough, which is so constituted as to act corruptly, is in the eye of reason corrupt, whether it be by the uncontrollable power of a few, or by an accidental pravity of the multitude. The objection, in which is urged the injustice of making the innocent suffer with the guilty, is an objection not only against society, but against the possibility of society. All societies, great and small, subsist upon this condition; that as the individuals derive advantages from union, they may likewise suffer inconveniences; that as those who do nothing, and sometimes those who do ill, will have the honours and emoluments of general virtue and general prosperity, so those likewise who do nothing, or perhaps do well, must be involved in the consequences of predominant corruption.'

This in my opinion was a very nice case; but the decision was affirmed in the House of Lords.

On Monday, May 8, we went together and visited the mansions of Bedlam. I had been informed that he had once been there before with Mr. Wedderburne (now Lord Loughborough), Mr. Murphy, and Mr. Foote; and I have heard Foote give a very entertaining account of Johnson's happening to have his attention arrested by a man who was very furious, and who, while beating his straw, supposed it was William, Duke of Cumberland, whom he was punishing for his cruelties in Scotland in 1746.¹ There was nothing peculiarly remarkable this day; but the general contemplation of insanity was very affecting. I accompanied him home, and dined and drank tea with him.

Talking of an acquaintance of ours, distinguished for knowing an uncommon variety of miscellaneous articles, both in antiquities and polite literature, he observed, 'You know, sir, he runs about with little

¹ My very honourable friend General Sir George Howard, who served in the Duke of Cumberland's army, has assured me that the cruelties were not imputable to his Royal Highness.

weight upon his mind.' And talking of another very ingenious gentleman, who from the warmth of his temper was at variance with many of his acquaintance, and wished to avoid them, he said, 'Sir, he leads the life of an outlaw.'

On Friday, May 12, as he had been so good as to assign me a room in his house, where I might sleep occasionally, when I happened to sit with him to a late hour, I took possession of it this night, found everything in excellent order, and was attended by honest Francis with a most civil assiduity. I asked Johnson whether I might go to a consultation with another lawyer upon Sunday, as that appeared to me to be doing work as much in my way as if an artisan should work on the day appropriated for religious rest. JOHNSON: 'Why, sir, when you are of consequence enough to oppose the practice of consulting upon Sunday, you should do it; but you may go now. It is not criminal, though it is not what one should do who is anxious for the preservation and increase of piety, to which a peculiar observance of Sunday is a great help. The distinction is clear between what is of moral and what is of ritual obligation.'

On Saturday, May 13, I breakfasted with him by invitation, accompanied by Mr. Andrew Crosbie, a Scotch advocate, whom he had seen at Edinburgh, and the Hon. Colonel (now General) Edward Stopford, brother to Lord Courtown, who was desirous of being introduced to him. His tea and rolls and butter, and whole breakfast apparatus, were all in such decorum, and his behaviour was so courteous, that Colonel Stopford was quite surprised, and wondered at his having heard so much said of Johnson's slovenliness

and roughness. I have preserved nothing of what passed, except that Crosbie pleased him much by talking learnedly of alchemy, as to which Johnson was not a positive unbeliever, but rather delighted in considering what progress had actually been made in the transmutation of metals, what near approaches there had been to the making of gold; and told us that it was affirmed that a person in the Russian dominions had discovered the secret, but died without revealing it, as imagining it would be prejudicial to society. He added that it was not impossible but it might in time be generally known.

It being asked whether it was reasonable for a man to be angry at another whom a woman had preferred to him?—JOHNSON: ‘I do not see, sir, that it is reasonable for a man to be angry at another whom a woman has preferred to him: but angry he is no doubt; and he is loth to be angry at himself.’

Before setting out for Scotland on the 23rd I was frequently in his company at different places, but during this period have recorded only two remarks: one concerning Garrick: ‘He has not Latin enough. He finds out the Latin by the meaning rather than the meaning by the Latin.’ And another concerning writers of travels, who, he observed, ‘were more defective than any other writers.’

I passed many hours with him on the 17th, of which I find all my memorial is, ‘much laughing.’ It should seem he had that day been in a humour for jocularities and merriment, and upon such occasions I never knew a man laugh more heartily. We may suppose that the high relish of a state so different from his habitual gloom produced more than ordinary exertions of that

distinguishing faculty of man, which has puzzled philosophers so much to explain. Johnson's laugh was as remarkable as any circumstance in his manner. It was a kind of good-humoured growl. Tom Davies described it drolly enough: 'He laughs like a rhinoceros.'

TO BENNET LANGTON, ESQ.

'DEAR SIR,—I have an old amanuensis in great distress. I have given what I think I can give, and begged till I cannot tell where to beg again. I put into his hands this morning four guineas. If you could collect three guineas more, it would clear him from his present difficulty.—I am, sir, your most humble servant,

SAM. JOHNSON.

'May 21, 1775.'

TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

'DEAR SIR,—I make no doubt but you are now safely lodged in your own habitation, and have told all your adventures to Mrs. Boswell and Miss Veronica. Pray teach Veronica to love me. Bid her not mind mamma.

'Mrs. Thrale has taken cold, and been very much disordered, but I hope is grown well. Mr. Langton went yesterday to Lincolnshire, and has invited Nicolaida¹ to follow him. Beauclerk talks of going to Bath. I am to set out on Monday; so there is nothing but dispersion.

'I have returned Lord Hailes's entertaining sheets, but must stay till I come back for more, because it will be inconvenient to send them after me in my vagrant state.

'I promised Mrs. Macaulay² that I would try to serve her son at Oxford. I have not forgotten it, nor am unwilling to perform it. If they desire to give him an English education, it should be considered whether they cannot send him for a year or two to an English school. If he comes immediately from Scotland he can make no figure in our Universities. The

¹ A learned Greek.

² Wife of the Reverend Mr. Kenneth Macaulay, author of *The History of St. Kilda*.

schools in the north, I believe, are cheap; and when I was a young man were eminently good.

‘There are two little books published by the Foulis, Telemachus, and Collins’s poems, each a shilling; I would be glad to have them.

‘Make my compliments to Mrs. Boswell, though she does not love me. You see what perverse things ladies are, and how little to be trusted with feudal estates. When she mends and loves me, there may be more hope of her daughters.

‘I will not send compliments to my friends by name, because I would be loth to leave any out in the enumeration. Tell them, as you see them, how well I speak of Scotch politeness, and Scotch hospitality, and Scotch beauty, and of everything Scotch, but Scotch oatcakes, and Scotch prejudices.

‘Let me know the answer of Raasay, and the decision relating to Sir Allan.¹—I am, my dearest sir, with great affection, your most obliged and most humble servant,

SAM. JOHNSON.

‘May 27, 1775.’

After my return to Scotland I wrote three letters to him, from which I extract the following passages :

‘I have seen Lord Hailes since I came down. He thinks it wonderful that you are pleased to take so much pains in revising his *Annals*. I told him that you said you were well rewarded by the entertainment which you had in reading them.’

‘There has been a numerous flight of Hebrideans in Edinburgh this summer, whom I have been happy to entertain at my house. Mr. Donald Macqueen² and Lord Monboddo supped with me one evening. They joined in controverting your proposition that the Gaelic of the Highlands and Isles of Scotland was not written till of late.’

‘My mind has been somewhat dark this summer. I have

¹ A lawsuit carried on by Sir Allan Maclean, Chief of his clan, to recover certain parts of his family estates from the Duke of Argyll.

² A very learned minister in the Isle of Skye, whom both Dr. Johnson and I have mentioned with regard.

need of your warming and vivifying rays ; and I hope I shall have them frequently. I am going to pass some time with my father at Auchinleck.'

TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

'DEAR SIR,—I am returned from the annual ramble into the middle counties. Having seen nothing I had not seen before, I have nothing to relate. Time has left that part of the island few antiquities ; and commerce has left the people no singularities. I was glad to go abroad, and, perhaps, glad to come home ; which is, in other words, I was, I am afraid, weary of being at home, and weary of being abroad. Is not this the state of life ? But, if we confess this weariness, let us not lament it ; for all the wise and all the good say that we may cure it.

'For the black fumes which rise in your mind I can prescribe nothing, but that you disperse them by honest business or innocent pleasure, and by reading, sometimes easy and sometimes serious. Change of place is useful ; and I hope that your residence at Auchinleck will have many good effects.

'That I should have given pain to Raasay I am sincerely sorry ; and am therefore very much pleased that he is no longer uneasy. He still thinks that I have represented him as personally giving up the chieftainship. I meant only that it was no longer contested between the two houses, and supposed it settled, perhaps, by the cession of some remote generation in the house of Dunvegan. I am sorry the advertisement was not continued for three or four times in the paper.

'That Lord Monboddo and Mr. Macqueen should controvert a position contrary to the imaginary interest of literary or national prejudice, might be easily imagined ; but of a standing fact there ought to be no controversy ; if there are men with tails, catch an *homo caudatus* ; if there was writing of old in the Highlands or Hebrides, in the Erse language, produce the manuscripts. Where men write, they will write to one another, and some of their letters, in families studious

of their ancestry, will be kept. In Wales there are many manuscripts.

‘I have now three parcels of Lord Hailes’ History, which I propose to return all the next week: that his respect for my little observations should keep his work in suspense, makes one of the evils of my journey. It is in our language, I think, a new mode of history which tells all that is wanted, and, I suppose, all that is known, without laboured splendour of language, or affected subtilty of conjecture. The exactness of his dates raises my wonder. He seems to have the closeness of Henault without his constraint.

‘Mrs. Thrale was so entertained with your *Journal*,¹ that she almost read herself blind. She has a great regard for you.

‘Of Mrs. Boswell, though she knows in her heart that she does not love me, I am always glad to hear any good, and hope that she and the little dear ladies will have neither sickness nor any other affliction. But she knows that she does not care what becomes of me, and for that she may be sure that I think her very much to blame.

‘Never, my dear sir, do you take it into your head to think that I do not love you; you may settle yourself in full confidence both of my love and my esteem; I love you as a kind man, I value you as a worthy man, and hope in time to reverence you as a man of exemplary piety. I hold you, as Hamlet has it, “in my heart of hearts,” and therefore it is little to say, that I am, sir, your affectionate humble servant,

‘SAM. JOHNSON.

‘*London, August 27, 1775.*’

TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

‘SIR,—If in these papers,² there is little alteration attempted, do not suppose me negligent. I have read them perhaps more closely than the rest; but I find nothing worthy of an objection.

¹ My *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides*, which that lady read in the original manuscript.

² Another parcel of Lord Hailes’ *Annals of Scotland*.

‘Write to me soon, and write often, and tell me all your honest heart.—I am, sir, yours affectionately,

‘SAM. JOHNSON.

‘August 30, 1775.’

TO THE SAME

‘MY DEAR SIR,—I now write to you, lest in some of your freaks and humours you should fancy yourself neglected. Such fancies I must entreat you never to admit, at least never to indulge; for my regard for you is so radicated and fixed, that it is become part of my mind and cannot be effaced but by some cause uncommonly violent; therefore whether I write or not, set your thoughts at rest. I now write to tell you that I shall not very soon write again, for I am to set out to-morrow on another journey.

‘Your friends are all well at Streatham, and in Leicester Fields.¹ Make my compliments to Mrs. Boswell, if she is in good humour with me.—I am, sir, etc.,

‘SAM. JOHNSON.

‘September 14, 1775.’

What he mentions in such light terms, as ‘I am to set out to-morrow on another journey,’ I soon afterwards discovered was no less than a tour to France with Mr. and Mrs. Thrale. This was the only time in his life that he went upon the Continent.

TO MR. ROBERT LEVET

‘Calais, Sept. 18, 1775.

‘DEAR SIR,—We are here in France, after a very pleasing passage of no more than six hours. I know not when I shall write again, and therefore I write now, though you cannot suppose that I have much say. You have seen France yourself. From this place we are going to Rouen, and from Rouen to Paris, where Mr. Thrale designs to stay about five or six

¹ Where Sir Joshua Reynolds lived.

weeks. We have a regular recommendation to the English resident, so we shall not be taken for vagabonds. We think to go one way and return another, and for as much as we can, I will try to speak a little French; I tried hitherto but little, but I spoke sometimes. If I heard better I suppose I should learn faster.—I am, sir, your humble servant,

‘SAM. JOHNSON.’

TO MR. ROBERT LEVET

Paris, Oct. 22, 1775.

‘DEAR SIR,—We are still here, commonly very busy in looking about us. We have been to-day to Versailles. You have seen it, and I shall not describe it. We came yesterday from Fontainebleau, where the Court is now. We went to see the King and Queen at dinner, and the Queen was so impressed by Miss,¹ that she sent one of the gentlemen to inquire who she was. I find all true that you have ever told me at Paris. Mr. Thrale is very liberal, and keeps us two coaches, and a very fine table; but I think our cookery very bad. Mrs. Thrale got into a convent of English nuns, and I talked with her through the grate, and I am very kindly used by the English Benedictine friars. But upon the whole I cannot make much acquaintance here; and though the churches, palaces, and some private houses are very magnificent, there is no very great pleasure after having seen many in seeing more; at least the pleasure, whatever it be, must some time have an end, and we are beginning to think when we shall come home. Mr. Thrale calculates that as we left Streatham on the fifteenth of September we shall see it again about the fifteenth of November.

‘I think I had not been on this side of the sea five days before I found a sensible improvement in my health. I ran a race in the rain this day, and beat Baretti. Baretti is a fine fellow, and speaks French, I think, quite as well as English.

‘Make my compliments to Mrs. Williams; and give my love to Francis; and tell my friends that I am not lost.—I am, dear sir, your affectionate humble, etc.,

‘SAM. JOHNSON.’

¹ Miss Thrale.

TO DR. SAMUEL JOHNSON

'Edinburgh, Oct. 24, 1775.

'MY DEAR SIR,—If I had not been informed that you were at Paris you should have had a letter from me by the earliest opportunity, announcing the birth of my son, on the 9th instant; I have him named Alexander, after my father. I now write, as I suppose your fellow-traveller, Mr. Thrale, will return to London this week to attend his duty in Parliament, and that you will not stay behind him.

'I send another parcel of Lord Hailes' *Annals*. I have undertaken to solicit you for a favour to him, which he thus requests in a letter to me: "I intend soon to give you the 'Life of Robert Bruce,' which you will be pleased to transmit to Dr. Johnson. I wish that you could assist me in a fancy which I have taken, of getting Dr. Johnson to draw a character of Robert Bruce, from the account that I give of that prince. If he finds materials for it in my work, it will be a proof that I have been fortunate in selecting the most striking incidents."

'I suppose by the "Life of Robert Bruce," his Lordship means that part of his *Annals* which relates to the history of that prince, and not a separate work.

'Shall we have *A Journey to Paris* from you in the winter? You will, I hope, at any rate be kind enough to give me some account of your French travels very soon, for I am very impatient. What a different scene have you viewed this autumn from that which you viewed in autumn 1773!—I ever am, my dear sir, your much obliged and affectionate humble servant,

JAMES BOSWELL.'

TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

'DEAR SIR,—I am glad that the young Laird is born, and an end, as I hope, put to the only difference that you can ever have with Mrs. Boswell.¹ I know that she does not love me; but I intend to persist in wishing her well till I get the better of her.

'Paris is, indeed, a place very different from the Hebrides,

¹ This alludes to my old feudal principle of preferring male to female succession.

but it is to a hasty traveller not so fertile of novelty, nor affords so many opportunities of remark. I cannot pretend to tell the public anything of a place better known to many of my readers than to myself. We can talk of it when we meet.

‘I shall go next week to Streatham, from whence I purpose to send a parcel of the *History* every post. Concerning the character of Bruce, I can only say, that I do not see any great reason for writing it; but I shall not easily deny what Lord Hailes and you concur in desiring.

‘I have been remarkably healthy all the journey, and hope you and your family have known only that trouble and danger which has so happily terminated. Among all the congratulations that you may receive, I hope you believe none more warm or sincere than those of, dear sir, your most affectionate

‘SAM. JOHNSON.

‘*November 16, 1775.*’

TO MRS. LUCY PORTER, IN LICHFIELD ¹

‘DEAR MADAM,—This week I came home from Paris. I have brought you a little box, which I thought pretty; but I know not whether it is properly a snuff-box, or a box for some other use. I will send it when I can find an opportunity. I have been through the whole journey remarkably well. My fellow-travellers were the same whom you saw at Lichfield, only we took Baretti with us. Paris is not so fine a place as you would expect. The palaces and churches, however, are very splendid and magnificent; and what would please you, there are many very fine pictures; but I do not think their way of life commodious or pleasant.

‘Let me know how your health has been all this while. I hope the fine summer has given you strength sufficient to encounter the winter.

¹ There can be no doubt that many years previous to 1775 he corresponded with this lady, who was his step-daughter, but none of his earlier letters to her have been preserved.

[Since the death of the author, several of Johnson's letters to Mrs. Lucy Porter, written before 1775, were obligingly communicated by the Rev. Dr. Vyse to Mr. Malone, and are printed in the present edition.—M.]

'Make my compliments to all my friends; and, if your fingers will let you, write to me, or let your maid write, if it be troublesome to you.—I am, dear madam, your most affectionate humble servant,
SAM. JOHNSON.

'Nov. 16, 1775.'

TO THE SAME

'DEAR MADAM,—Some weeks ago I wrote to you to tell you that I was just come home from a ramble, and hoped that I should have heard from you. I am afraid winter has laid hold on your fingers, and hinders you from writing. However, let somebody write, if you cannot, and tell me how you do, and a little of what has happened at Lichfield among our friends. I hope you are all well.

'When I was in France I thought myself growing young, but am afraid that cold weather will take part of my new vigour from me. Let us, however, take care of ourselves, and lose no part of our health by negligence.

'I never knew whether you received the Commentary on the New Testament, and the Travels, and the glasses.

'Do, my dear love, write to me; and do not let us forget each other. This is the season of good wishes, and I wish you all good. I have not lately seen Mr. Porter,¹ nor heard of him. Is he with you?

'Be pleased to make my compliments to Mrs. Adey, and Mrs. Cobb, and all my friends; and when I can do any good let me know.—I am, dear madam, yours most affectionately,

'SAM. JOHNSON.

'December, 1775.'

It is to be regretted that he did not write an account of his travels in France; for as he is reported to have once said, that 'he could write the Life of a Broomstick,'² so, notwithstanding so many former

¹ Son of Mrs. Johnson by her first husband.

² [This is Stella Johnson's witticism, and was said by her of Swift.—A. B.]

travellers have exhausted almost every subject for remark in that kingdom, his very accurate observation, and peculiar vigour of thought and illustration, would have produced a valuable work. During his visit to it, which lasted but about two months, he wrote notes or minutes of what he saw. He promised to show me them, but I neglected to put him in mind of it; and the greatest part of them has been lost, or perhaps destroyed in a precipitate burning of his papers a few days before his death, which must ever be lamented: one small paper book, however, entitled *France II.*, has been preserved, and is in my possession. It is a diurnal register of his life and observations, from the 10th of October to the 4th of November, inclusive, being twenty-six days, and shows an extraordinary attention to various minute particulars. Being the only memorial of this tour that remains, my readers, I am confident, will peruse it with pleasure, though his notes are very short, and evidently written only to assist his own recollection:

‘Oct. 10, *Tuesday*. We saw the *Ecole Militaire*, in which one hundred and fifty young boys are educated for the army. They have arms of different sizes, according to the age;—flints of wood. The building is very large, but nothing fine except the council-room. The French have large squares in the windows;—they make good iron palisades. Their meals are gross.

‘We visited the Observatory, a large building of a great height. The upper stones of the parapet very large, but not cramped with irons. The flat on the top is very extensive; but on the insulated part there is no parapet. Though it was broad enough I did not care to go upon it. Maps were printing in one of the rooms.

‘We walked to a small convent of the Fathers of the

Oratory. In the reading-desk of the refectory lay the lives of the Saints.

'Oct. 11, *Wednesday*. We went to see *Hôtel de Chatlois*, a house not very large, but very elegant. One of the rooms was gilt to a degree that I never saw before. The upper part for servants and their masters was pretty.

'Thence we went to Mr. Monville's, a house divided into small apartments, furnished with effeminate and minute elegance.—Porphyry.

'Thence we went to St. Roque's Church, which is very large;—the lower part of the pillars incrustated with marble.—Three chapels behind the high altar;—the last a mass of low arches.—Altars, I believe, all round.

'We passed through *Place de Vendôme*, a fine square, about as big as Hanover Square. Inhabited by the high families.—Louis XIV. on horseback in the middle.

'Monville is the son of a farmer-general. In the house of Chatlois is a room furnished with japan, fitted up in Europe.

'We dined with Boccage, the Marquis Blanchetti, and his lady.—The sweetmeats taken by the Marchioness Blanchetti, after observing that they were dear. Mr. Le Roy, Count Manucci, the Abbé, the Prior, and Father Wilson, who stayed with me till I took him home in the coach.

'Bathiani is gone.

'The French have no laws for the maintenance of their poor.—Monk not necessarily a priest.—Benedictines rise at four;—are at church an hour and half; at church again half an hour before, half an hour after, dinner; and again from half an hour after seven to eight. They may sleep eight hours.—Bodily labour wanted in monasteries.

'The poor taken to hospitals and miserably kept.—Monks in the convent fifteen:—accounted poor.

'Oct. 12, *Thursday*. We went to the Gobelins.—Tapestry makes a good picture;—imitates flesh exactly.—One piece with a gold ground;—the birds not exactly coloured.—Then we went to the King's cabinet;—very neat, not, perhaps, perfect.—Gold ore.—Candles of the candle-tree.—Seeds.—Woods. Thence to Gagnier's house, where I saw rooms nine, furnished with a profusion of wealth and elegance which I never had seen before.—Vases.—Pictures.—The dragon china.

—The lustre said to be of crystal, and to have cost £3500.—The whole furniture said to have cost £125,000.—Damask hangings covered with pictures.—Porphyry.—This house struck me.—Then we waited on the ladies to Monville's.—Captain Irwin with us.¹—Spain. County towns all beggars.—At Dijon he could not find the way to Orleans.—Cross roads of France very bad.—Five soldiers.—Woman.—Soldiers escaped.—The Colonel would not lose five men for the death of one woman.—The magistrate cannot seize a soldier but by the Colonel's permission.—Good inn at Nismes.—Moors of Barbary fond of Englishmen.—Gibraltar eminently healthy;—it has beef from Barbary.—There is a large garden.—Soldiers sometimes fall from the rock.

'Oct. 13, *Friday*. I stayed at home all day, only went to find the prior, who was not at home.—I read something in Canus.²—*Nec admiror, nec multum laudo*.

'Oct. 14, *Saturday*. We went to the house of Mr. Argenson, which was almost wainscoted with looking-glasses, and covered with gold.—The ladies' closet wainscoted with large squares of glass over painted paper. They always place mirrors to reflect their rooms.

'Then we went to Julien's, the Treasurer of the Clergy:—£30,000 a year.—The house has no very large room, but is set with mirrors, and covered with gold.—Books of wood here, and in another library.

'At D——'s I looked into the books in the lady's closet, and, in contempt, showed them to Mr. T.—*Prince Titi*; *Bibl. des Fées*, and other books.—She was offended, and shut up, as we heard afterwards, her apartment.

'Then we went to Julien Le Roy, the King's watchmaker, a man of character in his business, who showed a small clock made to find the longitude.—A decent man.

'Afterwards we saw the *Palais Marchand*, and the Courts of Justice, civil and criminal.—Queries on the *Sellette*.—This

¹ The rest of this paragraph appears to be a minute of what was told by Captain Irwin.

² Melchior Canus, a celebrated Spanish Dominican, who died at Toledo, in 1560. He wrote a treatise *De Locis Theologicis*, in twelve books.

building has the old Gothic passages, and a great appearance of antiquity.—Three hundred prisoners sometimes in the jail.

‘Much disturbed; hope no ill will be.¹

‘In the afternoon I visited Mr. Freron, the journalist. He spoke Latin very scantily, but seemed to understand me.—His house not splendid, but of commodious size.—His family, wife, son, and daughter, not elevated but decent.—I was pleased with my reception.—He is to translate my books, which I am to send him with notes.

‘Oct. 15, *Sunday*. At Choisi, a royal palace on the banks of the Seine, about 7 m. from Paris.—The terrace noble along the river.—The rooms numerous and grand, but not discriminated from other palaces.—The chapel beautiful but small.—China globes.—Inlaid tables.—Labyrinth.—Sinking table.—Toilet tables.

‘Oct. 16, *Monday*. The Palais Royal very grand, large, and lofty.—A very great collection of pictures.—Three of Raphael.—Two Holy Family.—One small piece of M. Angelo.—One room of Rubens.—I thought the pictures of Raphael fine.

‘The Tuileries.—Statues.—Venus.—Æneas and Anchises in his arms.—Nilus.—Many more. The walks not open to mean persons.—Chairs at night hired for two sous a piece.—Pont tournant.

‘Austin Nuns.—Grate.—Mrs. Fermor, Abbess.—She knew Pope, and thought him disagreeable.—Mrs. — has many books;—has seen life.—Their frontlet disagreeable.—Their hood.—Their life easy.—Rise about five; hour and half in chapel.—Dine at ten. Another hour and half at chapel; half an hour about three, and half an hour more at seven:—four hours in chapel.—A large garden.—Thirteen pensioners.—Teacher complained.

‘At the Boulevards saw nothing, yet was glad to be there.—Rope dancing and farce.—Egg dance.

‘N. [Note.] Near Paris, whether on week-days or Sundays, the roads empty.

¹ This passage, which so many think superstitious, reminds me of Archbishop Laud's *Diary*.

'Oct. 17, *Tuesday*. At the Palais Marchand I bought

A snuff-box, . . .	24 L.
— . . .	6
Table book, . . .	15
Scissors 3 p. [pair], . . .	18
—	—

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'We heard the lawyers plead.—N. As many killed at Paris as there are days in the year.—*Chambre de question*.—Tournelle at the Palais Marchand.—An old venerable building.

'The Palais Bourbon, belonging to the Prince of Condé. Only one small wing shown;—lofty;—splendid;—gold and glass.—The battles of the great Condé are painted in one of the rooms. The present Prince a grandsire at thirty-nine.

'The site of palaces, and other great buildings, leaves no very distinct images, unless to those who talk of them. As I entered my wife was in my mind:¹ she would have been pleased. Having now nobody to please, I am little pleased.

'N. In France there is no middle rank.

'So many shops open that Sunday is little distinguished at Paris.—The palaces of Louvre and Tuileries granted out in lodgings.

'In the *Palais de Bourbon*, gilt globes of metal at the fire-place.

'The French beds commended.—Much of the marble only paste.

'The colosseum a mere wooden building, at least much of it.

'Oct. 18, *Wednesday*. We went to Fontainebleau, which we found a large mean town, crowded with people. The forest thick with woods, very extensive.—Manucci secured us lodgings.—The appearance of the country pleasant.—No hills, few streams, only one hedge.—I remember no chapels nor crosses on the road.—Pavement still, and rows of trees.

'N. Nobody but mean people walk in Paris.

'Oct. 19, *Thursday*. At Court, we saw the apartments;—the King's bed-chamber and council-chamber, extremely splendid.—Persons of all ranks in the external rooms through

¹ His tender affection for his departed wife, of which there are many evidences in his *Prayers and Meditations*, appears very feelingly in this passage.

which the family passes;—servants and masters.—Brunet with us the second time.

‘The introducer came to us;—civil to me.—Presenting.—I had scruples.—Not necessary.—We went and saw the King and Queen at dinner.—We saw the other ladies at dinner—Madam Elizabeth with the Princess of Guimené.—At night we went to a comedy. I neither saw nor heard.—Drunken women.—Mrs. Th. preferred one to the other.

Oct. 20, Friday. We saw the Queen mount in the forest.—Brown habit; rode aside: one lady rode aside.—The Queen’s horse light grey;—martingale.—She galloped.—We then went to the apartments, and admired them.—Then wandered through the palace.—In the passages, stalls and shops.—Painting in fresco by a great master, worn out.—We saw the King’s horses and dogs.—The dogs almost all English—Degenerate.

‘The horses not much commended.—The stables cool; the kennel filthy.

‘At night the ladies went to the opera. I refused, but should have been welcome.

‘The King fed himself with his left hand as we.

‘*Saturday, 21.* In the night I got round.—We came home to Paris.—I think we did not see the chapel.—Tree broken by the wind.—The French chairs made all of boards painted.

‘N. Soldiers at the court of justice.—Soldiers not amenable to the magistrates.—Dijon woman.¹

‘Fagots in the palace.—Everything slovenly, except in the chief rooms.—Trees in the roads, some tall, none old, many very young and small.

‘Women’s saddles seem ill made.—Queen’s bridle woven with silver.—Tags to strike the horse.

‘*Sunday, Oct. 22.* To Versailles, a mean town. Carriages of business passing.—Mean shops against the wall.—Our way lay through Sêve, where the china manufacture.—Wooden bridge at Sêve, in the way to Versailles.—The palace of great extent.—The front long; I saw it not perfectly.—The Menagerie. Cygnets dark; their black feet; on the ground; tame.—Halcyons, or gulls.—Stag and hind, young.—Aviary,

¹ See p. 234.

very large: the net, wire.—Blag stag of China, small.—Rhinceros, the horn broken or pared away, which, I suppose, will grow; the basis, I think, four inches 'cross; the skin folds like loose cloth doubled over his body, and cross his hips; a vast animal, though young; as big, perhaps, as four oxen.—The young elephant, with his tusks just appearing.—The brown bear put out his paws;—all very tame.—The lion.—The tigers I did not well view.—The camel, or dromedary, with two bunches called the Huguin,¹ taller than any horse.—Two camels with one bunch.—Among the birds was a pelican, who being let out, went to a fountain, and swam about to catch fish. His feet well webbed: he dipped his head, and turned his long bill sidewise. He caught two or three fish, but did not eat them.

'Trianon is a kind of retreat appendant to Versailles. It has an open portico; the pavement, and I think the pillars, of marble.—There are many rooms, which I do not distinctly remember.—A table of porphyry, about five feet long, and between two and three broad, given to Louis xiv. by the Venetian State.—In the council-room almost all that was not door or window, was, I think, looking-glass.—Little Trianon is a small palace like a gentleman's house.—The upper floor paved with brick.—Little Vienne.—The court is ill paved.—The rooms at the top are small, fit to soothe the imagination with privacy. In the front of Versailles are small basins of water on the terrace, and other basins, I think, below them. There are little courts.—The great gallery is wainscoted with mirrors, not very large, but joined by frames. I suppose the large plates were not yet made.—The playhouse was very large.—The chapel I do not remember if we saw—We saw one chapel, but I am not certain whether there or at Trianon.—The foreign office paved with bricks.—The dinner half a Louis each, and, I think, a Louis over.—Money given at Menagerie, three livres; at palace, six livres.

'Oct. 23, *Monday*. Last night I wrote to Levet.—We went to see the looking-glasses wrought. They came from Normandy in cast plates, perhaps the third of an inch thick. At Paris they are ground upon a marble table, by rubbing

¹ This epithet should be applied to this animal with one bunch.

one plate upon another with grit between them. The various sands, of which there are said to be five, I could not learn. The handle, by which the upper glass is moved, has the form of a wheel, which may be moved in all directions. The plates are sent up with their surfaces ground, but not polished, and so continue till they are bespoken, lest time should spoil the surface, as we were told. Those that are to be polished, are laid on a table covered with several thick cloths, hard strained, that the resistance may be equal; they are then rubbed with a hand rubber, held down hard by a contrivance which I did not well understand. The powder which is used last seemed to me to be iron dissolved by aqua fortis: they called it, as Baretti said, *marc de l'eau forte*, which he thought was dregs. They mentioned vitriol and saltpetre. The cannon ball swam in the quicksilver. To silver them, a leaf of beaten tin is laid, and rubbed with quicksilver, to which it unites. Then more quicksilver is poured upon it, which by its mutual [attraction] rises very high. Then a paper is laid at the nearest end of the plate, over which the glass is slid till it lies upon the plate, having driven much of the quicksilver before it. It is then, I think, pressed upon cloth, and then set sloping to drop the superfluous mercury; the slope is daily heightened towards a perpendicular.

'In the way I saw the Grève, the mayor's house, and the Bastile.

'We then went to Sans-terre, a brewer.¹ He brews with about as much malt as Mr. Thrall, and sells his beer at the same price, though he pays no duty for malt, and little more than half as much for beer. Beer is sold retail at 6d. a bottle. He brews 4000 barrels a year. There are seventeen brewers in Paris, of whom none is supposed to brew more than he;—reckoning them at 3000 each, they make 51,000 a year.—They make their malt, for malting is here no trade.

'The moat of the Bastile is dry.

'Oct. 24, Tuesday. We visited the King's library—I saw the *Speculum humanæ Salvationis*, rudely printed, with ink, sometimes pale, sometimes black; part supposed to be with

¹ [The detestable ruffian who afterwards conducted Louis the Sixteenth to the scaffold, and commanded the troops that guarded it during his murder.—M.]

wooden types, and part with pages cut in boards.—The Bible, supposed to be older than that of Mentz, in 62; it has no date; it is supposed to have been printed with wooden types.—I am in doubt; the print is large and fair, in two folios.—Another book was shown me, supposed to have been printed with wooden types;—I think, *Durandi Sanctuarium* in 58. This is inferred from the difference of form sometimes seen in the same letter, which might be struck with different puncheons.—The regular similitude of most letters proves better that they are metal. I saw nothing but the *Speculum*, which I had not seen, I think, before.

‘Thence to the Sorbonne.—The library very large, not in lattices like the King’s. *Marbone* and *Durandi*, q. collection 14 vol. *Scriptores de rebus Gallicis*, many folios.—*Histoire Genealogique of France*, 9 vol.—*Gallia Christiana*, the first edition, 4to, the last, f. 12 vol.—The Prior and Librarian dined [with us]:—I waited on them home.—Their garden pretty, with covered walks, but small; yet may hold many students.—The doctors of the Sorbonne are all equal;—choose those who succeed to vacancies.—Profit little.

‘Oct. 25, *Wednesday*. I went with the Prior to St. Cloud, to see Dr. Hooke.—We walked round the palace and had some talk.—I dined with our whole company at the Monastery.—In the library, *Beroald*,—*Cymon*,—*Titus*, from Boccace.—*Oratio Proverbialis* to the Virgin, from Petrarch; Falkland to Sandys;—Dryden’s Preface to the third vol. of *Miscellanies*.¹

‘Oct. 26, *Thursday*. We saw the china at Sêve, cut, glazed, painted. Bellevue, a pleasing house, not great: fine prospect.—Meudon, an old palace.—Alexander, in Porphyry: hollow between eyes and nose, thin cheeks.—Plato and Aristotle—Noble terrace overlooks the town.—St. Cloud.—Gallery not very high, nor grand, but pleasing.—In the rooms Michael Angelo, drawn by himself, Sir Thomas More, Des Cartes, Bochart, Naudæus, Mazarine.—Gilded wainscot, so common that it is not minded.—Gough and Keene.—Hooke came to us at the inn.—A message from Drumgold.

¹ He means, I suppose, that he read these different pieces while he remained in the library.

'Oct. 27, *Friday*. I stayed at home.—Gough and Keene, and Mrs. S——'s friend dined with us.—This day we began to have a fire.—The weather is grown very cold, and I fear has a bad effect upon my breath, which has grown much more free and easy in this country.

'*Sat., Oct. 28*. I visited the Grand Chartreux built by St. Louis.—It is built for forty, but contains only twenty-four, and will not maintain more.—The friar that spoke to us had a pretty apartment.—Mr. Barette says four rooms; I remember but three.—His books seemed to be French.—His garden was neat; he gave me grapes.—We saw the Place de Victoire, with the statues of the King, and the captive nations.

'We saw the palace and gardens of Luxembourg, but the gallery was shut.—We climbed to the top stairs.—I dined with Colbrooke, who had much company;—Foote, Sir George Rodney, Motteux, Udson, Taaf.—Called on the Prior, and found him in bed.

'Hotel—a guinea a day.—Coach, three guineas a week.—Valet de place, three l. a day.—*Avantcoureur*, a guinea a week.—Ordinary dinner, six l. a head.—Our ordinary seems to be about five guineas a day.—Our extraordinary expenses, as diversions, gratuities, clothes, I cannot reckon.—Our travelling is ten guineas a day.

'White stockings, 18 l.¹ Wig.—Hat.

'*Sunday, Oct. 29*. We saw the boarding-school.—The *Enfants trouvés*.—A room with about eighty-six children in cradles, as sweet as a parlour.—They lose a third; take in to perhaps more than seven [years old]; put them to trades; pin to them the papers sent with them.—Want nurses.—Saw their chapel.

'Went to St. Eustatia; saw an innumerable company of girls catechised, in many bodies, perhaps 100 to a catechist.—Boys taught at one time, girls at another.—The sermon; the preacher wears a cap, which he takes off at the name; his action uniform, not very violent.

'*Oct. 30, Monday*. We saw the library of St. Germain.—A very noble collection.—*Codex Divinorum Officiorum*,

¹ [*i.e.* 18 *livres*. Two pair of white silk stockings were probably purchased.—M.]

1459:—a letter, square like that of the *Offices*, perhaps the same.—The *Codex*, by Fust and Gernsheim.—*Meursius*, 12 v. fol.—*Amadis*, in French, 3 v. fol.—‘*Catholicon*’ *sine colophone*, but of 1460.—Two other editions,¹ one by — *Augustin. de Civitate Dei*, without name, date, or place, but of Fust’s square letter as it seems.

‘I dined with Colonel Drumgould ; had a pleasing afternoon.

‘Some of the books of St. Germain’s stand in presses from the wall, like those at Oxford.

Oct. 31, Tuesday. I lived at the Benedictines ; meagre day ; soup meagre, herrings, eels, both with sauce ; fried fish ; lentils, tasteless in themselves. In the library ; where I found *Maffeus’s de Historia Indica : Promontorium flectere, to double the Cape*. I parted very tenderly from the Prior and Friar Wilkes.

Maitre des Arts, 2 y.—*Bacc. Theol.* 3 y.—*Licentiate*, 2 y.—*Doctor Th.* 2 y. in all 9 years.—For the Doctorate three disputations, *Major, Minor, Subornica*.—Several colleges suppressed, and transferred to that which was the Jesuits’ College.

‘*Nov. 1, Wednesday.* We left Paris.—St. Denis, a large town ; the church not very large, but the middle aisle is very lofty and awful.—On the left are chapels built beyond the line of the wall, which destroy the symmetry of the sides. The organ is higher above the pavement than any I have ever seen.—The gates are of brass.—On the middle gate is the history of our Lord. The painted windows are historical, and said to be eminently beautiful.—We were at another church belonging to a convent, of which the portal is a dome ; we could not enter farther, and it was almost dark.

‘*Nov. 2, Thursday.* We came this day to Chantilly, a seat belonging to the Prince of Condé.—This place is eminently beautified by all varieties of waters starting up in fountains, falling in cascades, running in streams, and spread in lakes.—

¹ I have looked in vain into De Bure, Meerman, Maittaire, and other typographical books, for the two editions of the *Catholicon* which Dr. Johnson mentions here, with *names* which I cannot make out. I read ‘one by *Latinus*, one by *Boedinus*.’ I have deposited the original ms. in the British Museum, where the curious may see it. My grateful acknowledgments are due to Mr. Planta for the trouble he was pleased to take in aiding my researches.

The water seems to be too near the house.—All this water is brought from a source or river three leagues off, by an artificial canal, which for one league is carried underground.—The house is magnificent.—The cabinet seems well stocked; what I remember was, the jaws of a hippopotamus, and a young hippopotamus preserved, which, however, is so small, that I doubt its reality.—It seems too hairy for an abortion, and too small for a mature birth.—Nothing was in spirits; all was dry.—The dog; the deer; the ant-bear with long snout.—The toucan, long broad beak.—The stables were of very great length.—The kennel had no scents.—There was a mockery of a village.—The menagerie had few animals.¹—Two faussans,² or Brazilian weasels, spotted, very wild.—There is a forest, and, I think, a park.—I walked till I was very weary, and next morning felt my feet battered, and with pains in the toes.

'*Nov. 3, Friday.* We came to Compeigne, a very large town, with a royal palace built round a pentagonal court.—The court is raised upon vaults, and has, I suppose, an entry on one side by a gentle rise.—Talk of painting.—The church is not very large, but very elegant and splendid.—I had at first great difficulty to walk, but motion grew continually easier.—At night we came to Noyon, an episcopal city.—The cathedral is very beautiful, the pillars alternately Gothic and Corinthian.—We entered a very noble parochial church.—Noyon is walled, and is said to be three miles round.

'*Nov. 4, Saturday.* We rose very early, and came through St. Quintin to Cambray, not long after three.—We went to an English nunnery, to give a letter to Father Welch, the confessor, who came to visit us in the evening.

¹ The writing is so bad here, that the names of several of the animals could not be deciphered without much more acquaintance with natural history than I possess. Dr. Blagden, with his usual politeness, most obligingly examined the ms. To that gentleman, and to Dr. Gray, of the British Museum, who also very readily assisted me, I beg leave to express my best thanks.

² It is thus written by Johnson, from the French pronunciation of *fossane*. It should be observed, that the person who showed this menagerie was mistaken in supposing the *fossane* and the Brazilian weasel to be the same, the *fossane* being a different animal, and a native of Madagascar. I find them, however, upon one plate in Pennant's *Synopsis of Quadrupeds*.

'Nov. 5, *Sunday*. We saw the cathedral.—It is very beautiful, with chapels on each side.—The choir splendid.—The balustrade on one part brass.—The Neff very high and grand. The altar silver as far as it is seen.—The vestments very splendid.—At the Benedictines' church ——'

Here his *Journal*¹ ends abruptly. Whether he wrote any more after this time I know not; but probably not much, as he arrived in England about the 12th of November. These short notes of his tour, though they may seem minute taken singly, make together a considerable mass of information, and exhibit such an ardour of inquiry and acuteness of examination, as, I believe, are found in but few travellers, especially at an advanced age. They completely refute the idle notion which has been propagated *that he could not see*: and, if he had taken the trouble to revise and digest them, he undoubtedly could have expanded them into a very entertaining narrative.

When I met him in London the following year, the account which he gave me of his French tour was, 'Sir, I have seen all the visibilities of Paris, and around it; but to have formed an acquaintance with the people there, would have required more time than I could stay. I was just beginning to creep into acquaintance by means of Colonel Drumgould, a very high man, sir, head of *L'Ecole Militaire*, a most complete character, for he had first been a professor of rhetoric, and then became a soldier. And, sir, I was very kindly treated by the English Benedictines, and have a cell appropriated to me in their convent.'

¹ My worthy and ingenious friend, Mr. Andrew Lumisden, by his accurate acquaintance with France, enabled me to make out many proper names which Dr. Johnson had written indistinctly, and sometimes spelt erroneously.

He observed, 'The great in France live very magnificently, but the rest very miserably. There is no happy middle state as in England. The shops of Paris are mean: the meat in the markets is such as would be sent to a gaol in England; and Mr. Thrale justly observed that the cookery of the French was forced upon them by necessity; for they could not eat their meat unless they added some taste to it. The French are an indelicate people; they will spit upon any place. At Madame ——'s, a literary lady of rank, the footman took the sugar in his fingers and threw it into my coffee. I was going to put it aside; but hearing it was made on purpose for me, I e'en tasted Tom's fingers. The same lady would needs make tea à l'Angloise. The spout of the teapot did not pour freely; she bade the footman blow into it. France is worse than Scotland in everything but climate. Nature has done more for the French; but they have done less for themselves than the Scotch have done.'

It happened that Foote was at Paris at the same time with Dr. Johnson, and his description of my friend while there was abundantly ludicrous. He told me that the French were quite astonished at his figure and manner, and at his dress, which he obstinately continued exactly as in London;¹—his brown clothes,

¹ [Mr. Foote seems to have *embellished* a little in saying that Johnson did not alter his dress at Paris; as in his Journal is a memorandum about white stockings, wig, and hat. In another place we are told that 'during his travels in France he was furnished with a French-made wig of handsome construction.' That Johnson was not inattentive to his appearance is certain, from a circumstance related by Mr. Stevens, and inserted by Mr. Boswell in vol. vi. between June 15 and June 22, 1784.—I. BLAKEWAY.]

[Mr. Blakeway's observation is farther confirmed by a note in Johnson's diary (quoted by Sir John Hawkins, *Life of Johnson*, p. 517), by which it appears that he had laid out thirty pounds in clothes for his French journey.—M.]

black stockings, and plain shirt. He mentioned that an Irish gentleman said to Johnson, 'Sir, you have not seen the best French players.' JOHNSON: 'Players, sir! I look on them as no better than creatures set upon tables and joint stools to make faces and produce laughter, like dancing dogs.' 'But, sir, you will allow that some players are better than others?' JOHNSON: 'Yes, sir, as some dogs dance better than others.'

While Johnson was in France he was generally very resolute in speaking Latin. It was a maxim with him that a man should not let himself down by speaking a language which he speaks imperfectly. Indeed, we must have often observed how inferior, how much like a child a man appears, who speaks a broken tongue. When Sir Joshua Reynolds, at one of the dinners of the Royal Academy, presented him to a Frenchman of great distinction, he would not deign to speak French, but talked Latin, though his Excellency did not understand it, owing, perhaps, to Johnson's English pronunciation: yet upon another occasion he was observed to speak French to a Frenchman of high rank who spoke English; and being asked the reason, with some expression of surprise, he answered, 'because I think my French is as good as his English.' Though Johnson understood French perfectly, he could not speak it readily, as I have observed at his first interview with General Paoli, in 1769; yet he wrote it, I imagine, pretty well, as appears from some of his letters in Mrs. Piozzi's collection, of which I shall transcribe one:

A MADAME LA COMTESSE DE —

'July 16, 1775.

‘OUI, madame, le moment est arrivé, et il faut que je parte. Mais pourquoi faut il partir? Est ce que je m’ennuye? Je m’ennuierai ailleurs. Est-ce que je cherche ou quelque plaisir, ou quelque soulagement? Je ne cherche rien, je n’espère rien. Aller voir ce que j’ai vû, être un peu rejoué, un peu degouté, me resouvenir que la vie se passe en vain, me plaindre de moi, m’endurcir aux dehors; voici le tout de ce qu’on compte pour les délices de l’année. Que Dieu vous donne, madame, tous les agrémens de la vie, avec un esprit qui peut en jouir sans s’y livrer trop.’

Here let me not forget a curious anecdote, as related to me by Mr. Beauclerk, which I shall endeavour to exhibit as well as I can in that gentleman’s lively manner; and in justice to him it is proper to add that Dr. Johnson told me I might rely both on the correctness of his memory and the fidelity of his narrative. ‘When Madame de Boufflers was first in England (said Beauclerk), she was desirous to see Johnson. I accordingly went with her to his chambers in the Temple, where she was entertained with his conversation for some time. When our visit was over she and I left him, and were got into Inner Temple Lane, when all at once I heard a noise like thunder. This was occasioned by Johnson, who, it seems, upon a little recollection, had taken it into his head that he ought to have done the honours of his literary residence to a foreign lady of quality, and eager to show himself a man of gallantry, was hurrying down the staircase in violent agitation. He overtook us before we reached the Temple Gate, and brushing in between me and Madame de Boufflers, seized her hand, and

conducted her to her coach. His dress was a rusty brown morning suit, a pair of old shoes by way of slippers, a little shrivelled wig sticking on the top of his head, and the sleeves of his shirt and the knees of his breeches hanging loose. A considerable crowd of people gathered round, and were not a little struck by this singular appearance.'

He spoke Latin with wonderful fluency and elegance. When Père Boscovich was in England, Johnson dined in company with him at Sir Joshua Reynolds's and at Dr. Douglas's, now Bishop of Salisbury. Upon both occasions that celebrated foreigner expressed his astonishment at Johnson's Latin conversation. When at Paris, Johnson thus characterised Voltaire to Freron the journalist: '*Vir est acerrimi, ingenii, et paucarum literarum.*'

TO DR. SAMUEL JOHNSON

'*Edinburgh, Dec. 5, 1775.*

'MY DEAR SIR,—Mr. Alexander Maclean, the young Laird of Coll, being to set out to-morrow for London, I give him this letter to introduce him to your acquaintance. The kindness which you and I experienced from his brother, whose unfortunate death we sincerely lament, will make us always desirous to show attention to any branch of the family. Indeed, you have so much of the true Highland cordiality, that I am sure you would have thought me to blame if I had neglected to recommend to you this Hebridean prince, in whose island we were hospitably entertained.—I am ever with respectful attachment, my dear sir, your most obliged and most humble servant,

JAMES BOSWELL.'

Mr. Maclean returned with the most agreeable accounts of the polite attention with which he was received by Dr. Johnson.

In the course of this year Dr. Burney informs me that 'he very frequently met Dr. Johnson at Mr. Thrale's, at Streatham, where they had many long conversations, often sitting up as long as the fire and candles lasted, and much longer than the patience of the servants subsisted.'

A few of Johnson's sayings, which that gentleman recollects, shall here be inserted :

'I never take a nap after dinner but when I have had a bad night, and then the nap takes me.'

'The writer of an epitaph should not be considered as saying nothing but what is strictly true. Allowance must be made for some degree of exaggerated praise. In lapidary inscriptions a man is not upon oath.'

'There is now less flogging in our great schools than formerly, but then less is learned there ; so that what the boys get at one end they lose at the other.'

'More is learned in public than in private schools from emulation ; there is the collision of mind with mind, or the radiation of many minds pointing to one centre. Though few boys make their own exercises, yet if a good exercise is given up, out of a great number of boys, it is made by somebody.'

'I hate by-roads in education. Education is as well known, and has long been as well known, as ever it can be. Endeavouring to make children prematurely wise is useless labour. Suppose they have more knowledge at five or six years old than other children, what use can be made of it? It will be lost before it is wanted, and the waste of so much time and labour of the teacher can never be repaid. Too much is expected from precocity, and too little performed. Miss —— was an instance of early cultivation, but in

what did it terminate? In marrying a little Presbyterian parson, who keeps an infant boarding-school, so that all her employment now is,

“To suckle fools, and chronicle small beer.”

She tells the children, “This is a cat, and that is a dog, with four legs and a tail; see there! you are much better than a cat or a dog, for you can speak.” If I had bestowed such an education on a daughter, and had discovered that she thought of marrying such a fellow, I would have sent her to the *Congress*.’

After having talked slightly of music, he was observed to listen very attentively while Miss Thrale played on the harpsichord, and with eagerness he called to her, ‘Why don’t you dash away like Burney?’ Dr. Burney upon this said to him, ‘I believe, sir, we shall make a musician of you at last.’ Johnson, with candid complacency, replied, ‘Sir, I shall be glad to have a new sense given to me.’

He had come down one morning to the breakfast-room, and been a considerable time by himself before anybody appeared. When on a subsequent day he was twitted by Mrs. Thrale for being very late, which he generally was, he defended himself by alluding to the extraordinary morning when he had been too early. ‘Madam, I do not like to come down to *vacuity*.’

Dr. Burney having remarked that Mr. Garrick was beginning to look old, he said, ‘Why, sir, you are not to wonder at that; no man’s face has had more wear and tear.’

Not having heard from him for a longer time

than I supposed he would be silent, I wrote to him December 18, not in good spirits :

‘Sometimes I have been afraid that the cold which has gone over Europe this year, like a sort of pestilence, has seized you severely ; sometimes my imagination, which is, upon occasions, prolific of evil, hath figured that you may have somehow taken offence at some part of my conduct.’

TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

‘DEAR SIR,—Never dream of any offence. How should you offend me ? I consider your friendship as a possession, which I intend to hold till you take it from me, and to lament if ever by my fault I should lose it. However, when such suspicions find their way into your mind, always give them vent ; I shall make haste to disperse them ; but hinder their first ingress if you can. Consider such thoughts as morbid.

‘Such illness as may excuse my omission to Lord Hailes, I cannot honestly plead. I have been hindered, I know not how, by a succession of petty obstructions. I hope to mend immediately, and to send next post to his Lordship. Mr. Thrale would have written to you if I had omitted ; he sends his compliments and wishes to see you.

‘You and your lady will now have no more wrangling about feudal inheritance. How does the young Laird of Auchinleck ? I suppose Miss Veronica is grown a reader and discourser.

‘I have just now got a cough, but it has never yet hindered me from sleeping ; I have had quieter nights than are common with me.

‘I cannot but rejoice that Joseph¹ has had the wit to find the way back. He is a fine fellow, and one of the best travellers in the world.

‘Young Coll brought me your letter. He is a very pleasing

¹ Joseph Ritter, a Bohemian, who was in my service many years, and attended Dr. Johnson and me in our tour to the Hebrides. After having left me for some time, he had now returned to me.

youth. I took him two days ago to the Mitre, and we dined together. I was as civil as I had the means of being.

'I have had a letter from Raasay, acknowledging, with great appearance of satisfaction, the insertion in the Edinburgh paper. I am very glad that it was done.

'My compliments to Mrs. Boswell, who does not love me; and of all the rest, I need only send them to those that do; and I am afraid it will give you very little trouble to distribute them.—I am, my dear, dear sir, your affectionate humble servant,

SAM. JOHNSON.

'December 23, 1775.'

In 1776 Johnson wrote, so far as I can discover, nothing for the public: but that his mind was still ardent, and fraught with generous wishes to attain to still higher degrees of literary excellence, is proved by his private notes of this year, which I shall insert in their proper place.

TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

'DEAR SIR,—I have at last sent you all Lord Hailes' papers. While I was in France, I looked very often into Henault; but Lord Hailes, in my opinion, leaves him far and far behind. Why I did not dispatch so short a perusal sooner, when I look back, I am utterly unable to discover; but human moments are stolen away by a thousand petty impediments which leave no trace behind them. I have been afflicted, through the whole Christmas, with the general disorder, of which the worst effect was a cough, which is now much mitigated, though the country, on which I look from a window at Streatham, is now covered with a deep snow. Mrs. Williams is very ill; everybody else is as usual.

'Among the papers, I found a letter to you, which I think you had not opened; and a paper for the *Chronicle*, which I suppose it not necessary now to insert. I return them both.

'I have, within these few days, had the honour of receiving Lord Hailes' first volume, for which I return my most respectful thanks.

‘I wish you, my dearest friend, and your haughty lady (for I know she does not love me), and the young ladies, and the young Laird, all happiness. Teach the young gentleman, in spite of his mamma, to think and speak well of, sir, your affectionate humble servant,

SAM. JOHNSON.

‘Jan. 10, 1776.’

At this time was in agitation a matter of great consequence to me and my family, which I should not obtrude upon the world, were it not that the part which Dr. Johnson’s friendship for me made him take in it, was the occasion of an exertion of his abilities which it would be injustice to conceal. That what he wrote upon the subject may be understood, it is necessary to give a state of the question, which I shall do as briefly as I can.

In the year 1504, the barony or manor of Auchinleck (pronounced *Affleck*), in Ayrshire, which belonged to a family of the same name with the lands, having fallen to the Crown by forfeiture, James the Fourth, King of Scotland, granted it to Thomas Boswell, a branch of an ancient family in the county of Fife, styling him in the charter, ‘*dilecto familiari nostro*,’ and assigning, as the cause of the grant, ‘*pro bono et fidei servitio nobis præstito*.’ Thomas Boswell was slain in battle, fighting along with his Sovereign, at the fatal field of Flodden, in 1513.

From this very honourable founder of our family, the estate was transmitted, in a direct series of heirs-male, to David Boswell, my father’s great-granduncle, who had no sons, but four daughters, who were all respectably married, the eldest to Lord Cathcart.

David Boswell, being resolute in the military feudal principle of continuing the male succession, passed

by his daughters, and settled the estate on his nephew by his next brother, who approved of the deed, and renounced any pretensions which he might possibly have, in preference to his son. But the estate having been burdened with large portions to the daughters, and other debts, it was necessary for the nephew to sell a considerable part of it, and what remained was still much encumbered.

The frugality of the nephew preserved, and, in some degree, relieved the estate. His son, my grandfather, an eminent lawyer, not only repurchased a great part of what had been sold, but acquired other lands: and my father, who was one of the judges of Scotland, and had added considerably to the estate, now signified his inclination to take the privilege allowed by our law,¹ to secure it to his family in perpetuity by an entail, which, on account of his marriage articles, could not be done without my consent.

In the plan of entailing the estate, I heartily concurred with him, though I was the first to be restrained by it; but we unhappily differed as to the series of heirs which should be established, or in the language of our law, called to the succession. My father had declared a predilection for heirs-general, that is, males and females indiscriminately. He was willing, however, that all males descending from his grandfather should be preferred to females; but would not extend that privilege to males deriving their descent from a higher source. I, on the other hand, had a zealous partiality for heirs-male, however remote, which I maintained by arguments which appeared to me to

¹ Acts of Parliaments of Scotland, 1685, cap. 22.

have considerable weight.¹ And in the particular case of our family, I apprehended that we were under an implied obligation, in honour and good faith, to transmit the estate by the same tenure which we held it, which was as heirs-male, excluding nearer females. I therefore, as I thought conscientiously, objected to my father's scheme.

My opposition was very displeasing to my father, who was entitled to great respect and deference; and I had reason to apprehend disagreeable consequences from my non-compliance with his wishes. After much perplexity and uneasiness, I wrote to Dr. Johnson, stating the case, with all its difficulties, at full length, and earnestly requesting that he would consider it at

¹ As first, the opinion of some distinguished naturalists, that our species is transmitted through males only, the female being all along no more than a *nidus*, or nurse, as Mother Earth is to plants of every sort, which notion seems to be confirmed by that text of Scripture, 'He was yet *in the loins of his FATHER* when Melchisedec met him' (Heb. vii. 10), and consequently, that a man's grandson by a daughter, instead of being his *surest* descendant, as is vulgarly said, has in reality no connection whatever with his blood. And, secondly, independent of this theory (which, if true, should completely exclude heirs-general), that if the preference of a male to a female, without regard to primogeniture (as a son, though much younger, nay, even a grandson by a son, to a daughter), be once admitted, as it universally is, it must be equally reasonable and proper in the most remote degree of descent from an original proprietor of an estate, as in the nearest; because—however distant from the representative at the time—that remote heir-male, upon the failure of those nearer to the *original proprietor* than he is, becomes in fact the nearest male to *him*, and is, therefore, preferable as *his* representative, to a female descendant. A little extension of mind will enable us easily to perceive that a son's son, in continuation to whatever length of time, is preferable to a son's daughter, in the succession to an ancient inheritance; in which regard should be had to the representation of the original proprietor, and not to that of one of his descendants.

I am aware of Blackstone's admirable demonstration of the reasonableness of the legal succession, upon the principle of there being the greatest probability that the nearest heir of the person who last dies proprietor of an estate, is of the blood of the first purchaser. But supposing a pedigree to be carefully authenticated through all its branches, instead of mere *probability* there will be a *certainly* that the *nearest heir-male, at whatever period*, has the same right of blood with the first heir-male, namely, *the original purchaser's eldest son*.

leisure, and favour me with his friendly opinion and advice.

TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

‘DEAR SIR,—I was much impressed by your letter, and if I can form upon your case any resolution satisfactory to myself, will very gladly impart it: but whether I am equal to it I do not know. It is a case compounded of law and justice, and requires a mind versed in juridical disquisitions. Could not you tell your whole mind to Lord Hailes? He is, you know, both a Christian and a lawyer. I suppose he is above partiality, and above loquacity: and, I believe, he will not think the time lost in which he may quiet a disturbed, or settle a wavering, mind. Write to me as anything occurs to you; and if I find myself stopped by want of facts necessary to be known, I will make inquiries of you as my doubts arise.

‘If your former resolutions should be found only fanciful, you decide rightly in judging that your father’s fancies may claim the preference; but whether they are fanciful or rational is the question. I really think Lord Hailes could help us.

‘Make my compliments to dear Mrs. Boswell; and tell her, that I hope to be wanting in nothing that I can contribute to bring you all out of your troubles.—I am, dear sir, most affectionately, your humble servant,

SAM. JOHNSON.

‘*London, Jan. 15, 1776.*’

TO THE SAME

‘DEAR SIR,—I am going to write upon a question which requires more knowledge of local law, and more acquaintance with the general rules of inheritance, than I can claim; but I write because you request it.

‘Land is, like any other possession, by natural right wholly in the power of its present owner; and may be sold, given, or bequeathed, absolutely or conditionally, as judgment shall direct or passion incite.

‘But natural right would avail little without the protection of law; and the primary notion of law is restraint in the exercise of natural right. A man is therefore, in society, not

fully master of what he calls his own, but he still retains all the power which law does not take from him.

'In the exercise of the right which law either leaves or gives, regard is to be paid to moral obligations.

'Of the estate which we are now considering, your father still retains such possession, with such power over it that he can sell it and do with the money what he will, without any legal impediment. But when he extends his power beyond his own life, by settling the order of succession, the law makes your consent necessary.

'Let us suppose that he sells the land to risk the money in some specious adventure, and in that adventure loses the whole; his posterity would be disappointed; but they could not think themselves injured or robbed. If he spent it upon vice or pleasure his successors could only call him vicious and voluptuous; they could not say that he was injurious or unjust.

'He that may do more may do less. He that, by selling or squandering, may disinherit a whole family, may certainly disinherit part, by a partial settlement.

'Laws are formed by the manners and exigencies of particular times, and it is but accidental that they last longer than their causes: the limitation of feudal succession to the male arose from the obligation of the tenant to attend his chief in war.

'As times and opinions are always changing, I know not whether it be not usurpation to prescribe rules to posterity, by presuming to judge of what we cannot know: and I know not whether I fully approve either your design or your father's to limit that succession which descended to you unlimited. If we are to leave *sartum tectum* to posterity, what we have without any merit of our own received from our ancestors, should not choice and freewill be kept unviolated? Is land to be treated with more reverence than liberty?—If this consideration should restrain your father from disinheriting some of the males, does it leave you the power of disinheriting all the females?

'Can the possessor of a feudal estate make any will? Can he appoint, out of the inheritance, any portions to his daughter? There seems to be a very shadowy difference

between the power of leaving land and of leaving money to be raised from land ; between leaving an estate to females, and leaving the male heir, in effect, only their steward.

‘Suppose at one time a law that allowed only males to inherit, and during the continuance of this law many estates to have descended, passing by the females, to remoter heirs. Suppose afterwards the law repealed in correspondence with a change of manners, and women made capable of inheritance ; would not then the tenure of estates be changed ? Could the women have no benefit from a law made in their favour ? Must they be passed by upon moral principles for ever, because they were once excluded by a legal prohibition ? Or may that which passed only to males by one law, pass likewise to females by another ?

‘You mention your resolution to maintain the right of your brother :¹ I do not see how any of their rights are invaded.

‘As your whole difficulty arises from the act of your ancestor, who diverted the succession from the females, you inquire, very properly, what were his motives, and what was his intention ; for you certainly are not bound by his act more than he intended to bind you, nor hold your land on harder or stricter terms than those on which it was granted.

‘Intentions must be gathered from acts. When he left the estate to his nephew, by excluding his daughters, was it, or was it not, in his power to have perpetuated the succession to the males ? If he could have done it, he seems to have shown, by omitting it, that he did not desire it to be done, and, upon your own principles, you will not easily prove your right to destroy that capacity of succession which your ancestors have left.

‘If your ancestor had not the power of making a perpetual settlement ; and if, therefore, we cannot judge distinctly of his intentions, yet his act can only be considered as an example ; it makes not an obligation. And, as you observe, he sets no example of rigorous adherence to the line of succession. He that overlooked a brother would not wonder that little regard is shown to remote relations.

‘As the rules of succession are, in a great part, purely

¹ Which term I applied to all the heirs-male.

legal, no man can be supposed to bequeath anything, but upon legal terms; he can grant no power which the law denies; and if he makes no special and definite limitation, he confers all the power which the law allows.

‘Your ancestor, for some reason, disinherited his daughters; but it no more follows that he intended this act as a rule for posterity, than the disinheriting of his brother.

‘If, therefore, you ask by what right your father admits daughters to inheritance, ask yourself, first, by what right you require them to be excluded?

‘It appears, upon reflection, that your father excludes nobody; he only admits nearer females to inherit before males more remote: and the exclusion is purely consequential.

‘These, dear sir, are my thoughts, immethodical and deliberative; but, perhaps, you may find in them some glimmering of evidence.

‘I cannot, however, but again recommend to you a conference with Lord Hailes, whom you know to be both a lawyer and a Christian.

‘Make my compliments to Mrs. Boswell, though she does not love me.—I am, sir, your affectionate servant,

‘SAM. JOHNSON.

‘Feb. 3, 1776.’

I had followed his recommendation and consulted Lord Hailes, who upon this subject had a firm opinion contrary to mine. His Lordship obligingly took the trouble to write me a letter, in which he discussed, with legal and historical learning, the points in which I saw much difficulty, maintaining that ‘the succession of heirs-general was the succession, by the law of Scotland, from the throne to the cottage, as far as we can learn it by record,’ observing that the estate of our family had not been limited to heirs-male: and that though an heir-male had in one instance been chosen in preference to nearer females, that had been an arbitrary act, which had seemed to be best in the

embarrassed state of affairs at that time; and the fact was, that upon a fair computation of the value of land and money at the time, applied to the estate and the burdens upon it, there was nothing given to the heir-male but the skeleton of an estate. ‘The plea of conscience (said his Lordship) which you put, is a most respectable one, especially when *conscience* and *self* are on different sides. But I think that conscience is not well informed, and that *self* and *she* ought on this occasion to be of a side.’

This letter, which had considerable influence upon my mind, I sent to Dr. Johnson, begging to hear from him again, upon this interesting question :

TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

‘DEAR SIR,—Having not any acquaintance with the laws or customs of Scotland, I endeavoured to consider your question upon general principles, and found nothing of much validity that I could oppose to this position: “He who inherits a fief unlimited by his ancestors, inherits the power of limiting it according to his own judgment or opinion.” If this be true, you may join with your father.

‘Further consideration produces another conclusion: “He who receives a fief unlimited by his ancestors, gives his heirs some reason to complain if he does not transmit it unlimited to posterity. For why should he make the state of others worse than his own without a reason?” If this be true, though neither you nor your father are about to do what is quite right, but as your father violates (I think) the legal succession least, he seems to be nearer the right than yourself.

‘It cannot but occur that “Women have natural and equitable claims as well as men, and these claims are not to be capriciously or lightly superseded or infringed.” When fiefs implied military service, it is easily discerned why females could not inherit them; but that reason is now at an end. As manners make laws, manners likewise repeal them.

'These are the general conclusions which I have attained. None of them are very favourable to your scheme of entail, nor perhaps to any scheme. My observation, that only he who acquires an estate may bequeath it capriciously,¹ if it contains any conviction, includes this position likewise, that only he who acquires an estate may entail it capriciously. But I think it may be safely presumed that "he who inherits an estate, inherits all the power legally concomitant"; and that "he who gives or leaves unlimited an estate legally limitable, must be presumed to give that power of limitation which he omitted to take away and to commit future contingencies to future prudence." In these two positions I believe Lord Hailes will advise you to rest; every other notion of possession seems to me full of difficulties and embarrassed with scruples.

'If these axioms be allowed, you have arrived now at full liberty without the help of particular circumstances, which, however, have in your case great weight. You very rightly observe, that he who passing by his brother gave the inheritance to his nephew, could limit no more than he gave; and by Lord Hailes' estimate of fourteen years' purchase, what he gave was no more than you may easily entail according to your own opinion, if that opinion should finally prevail.

'Lord Hailes' suspicion that entails are encroachments on the dominion of Providence may be extended to all hereditary privileges and all permanent institutions; I do not see why it may not be extended to any provision for the present hour, since all care about futurity proceeds upon a supposition that we know at least in some degree what will be future. Of the future we certainly know nothing; but we may form conjectures from the past; and the power of forming conjectures includes, in my opinion, the duty of acting in conformity to that probability which we discover. Providence gives the power, of which reason teaches the use.—I am, dear sir, your most faithful servant,

SAM. JOHNSON.

'Feb. 9, 1776.

'I hope I shall get some ground now with Mrs. Boswell; make my compliments to her and to the little people.

'Don't burn papers; they may be safe enough in your own box,—you will wish to see them hereafter.'

¹ I had reminded him of his observation, mentioned p. 117.

TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

'DEAR SIR,—To the letters which I have written about your great question I have nothing to add. If your conscience is satisfied you have now only your prudence to consult. I long for a letter, that I may know how this troublesome and vexatious question is at last decided.¹ I hope that it will at last end well. Lord Hailes' letter was very friendly and very seasonable, but I think his aversion from entails has something in it like superstition. Providence is not counteracted by any means which Providence puts into our power. The continuance and propagation of families makes a great part of the Jewish law, and is by no means prohibited in the Christian institution, though the necessity of it continues no longer. Hereditary tenures are established in all civilised countries, and are accompanied in most with hereditary authority. Sir William Temple considers our constitution as defective, that there is not an unalienable estate in land connected with a peerage: and Lord Bacon mentions as a proof that the Turks are Barbarians, their want of *stirpes*, as he calls them, or hereditary rank. Do not let your mind, when it is freed from the supposed necessity of a rigorous entail, be entangled with contrary objections, and think all entails unlawful till you have cogent arguments which I believe you will never find. I am afraid of scruples.

'I have now sent all Lord Hailes' papers; part I found hidden in a drawer in which I had laid them for security, and had forgotten them. Part of these are written twice: I have returned both the copies. Part I had read before.

'Be so kind as to return Lord Hailes my most respectful thanks for his first volume: his accuracy strikes me with

¹ The entail framed by my father with various judicious clauses was settled by him and me, settling the estate upon the heirs-male of his grandfather, which I found had been already done by my grandfather, imperfectly, but so as to be defeated only by selling the lands. I was freed by Dr. Johnson from scruples of conscientious obligation, and could, therefore, gratify my father. But my opinion and partiality for male succession, in its full extent, remained unshaken. Yet let me not be thought harsh or unkind to daughters: for my notion is, that they should be treated with great affection and tenderness, and always participate of the prosperity of the family.

wonder; his narrative is far superior to that of Henault, as I have formerly mentioned.

'I am afraid that the trouble, which my irregularity and delay has cost him, is greater, far greater, than any good that I can do him will ever recompense; but if I have any more copy, I will try to do better.

'Pray let me know if Mrs. Boswell is friends with me, and pay my respects to Veronica, and Euphemia, and Alexander. —I am, sir, your most humble servant,

'SAM. JOHNSON.

'Feb. 15, 1776.'

MR. BOSWELL TO DR. JOHNSON

'Edinburgh, Feb. 20, 1776.

'You have illuminated by mind, and relieved me from imaginary shackles of conscientious obligation. Were it necessary, I could immediately join in an entail upon the series of heirs approved by my father; but it is better not to act too suddenly.'

DR. JOHNSON TO MR. BOSWELL

'DEAR SIR,—I am glad that what I could think or say has at all contributed to quiet your thoughts. Your resolution not to act till your opinion is confirmed by more deliberation is very just. If you have been scrupulous, do not be rash. I hope that as you think more, and take opportunities of talking with men intelligent in questions of property, you will be able to free yourself from every difficulty.

'When I wrote last, I sent, I think, ten packets. Did you receive them all?

'You must tell Mrs. Boswell that I suspected her to have written without your knowledge,¹ and therefore did not return any answer, lest a clandestine correspondence should have been perniciously discovered. I will write to her soon. . . . —I am, dear sir, most affectionately yours,

'SAM. JOHNSON.

'Feb. 24, 1776.'

¹ A letter to him on the interesting subject of the family settlement, which I had read.

Having communicated to Lord Hailes what Dr. Johnson wrote concerning the question which perplexed me so much, his Lordship wrote to me, 'Your scruples have produced more fruit than I ever expected from them; an excellent dissertation on general principles of morals and law.'

I wrote to Dr. Johnson on the 20th of February, complaining of melancholy, and expressing a strong desire to be with him; informing him that the ten packets came all safe; that Lord Hailes was much obliged to him, and said he had almost wholly removed his scruples against entails.

TO JAMES BOSWELL. ESQ.

'DEAR SIR,—I have not had your letter half an hour: as you lay so much weight upon my notions, I should think it not just to delay my answer.

'I am very sorry that your melancholy should return, and should be sorry likewise if it could have no relief but from my company. My counsel you may have when you are pleased to require it; but of my company you cannot in the next month have much, for Mr. Thrale will take me to Italy, he says, on the 1st of April.

'Let me warn you very earnestly against scruples. I am glad that you are reconciled to your settlement, and think it a great honour to have shaken Lord Hailes' opinion of entails. Do not, however, hope wholly to reason away your troubles; do not feed them with attention, and they will die imperceptibly away. Fix your thoughts upon your business, fill your intervals with company, and sunshine will again break in upon your mind. If you will come to me you must come very quickly; and even then I know not but we may scour the country together, for I have a mind to see Oxford and Lichfield before I set out on this long journey. To this I can only add that I am, dear sir, your most affectionate humble servant,

'SAM. JOHNSON.

'March 5, 1776.'

TO THE SAME

‘DEAR SIR,—Very early in April we leave England, and in the beginning of the next week I shall leave London for a short time; of this I think it necessary to inform you, that you may not be disappointed in any of your enterprises. I had not fully resolved to go into the country before this day.

‘Please to make my compliments to Lord Hailes; and mention very particularly to Mrs. Boswell my hope that she is reconciled to, sir, your faithful servant,

‘SAM. JOHNSON.

‘March 12, 1776.’

Above thirty years ago the heirs of Lord Chancellor Clarendon presented the University of Oxford with the continuation of his History, and such other of his Lordship’s manuscripts as had not been published, on condition that the profits arising from their publication should be applied to the establishment of a *manège* in the University. The gift was accepted in full convocation. A person being now recommended to Dr. Johnson as fit to superintend this proposed riding-school, he exerted himself with that zeal for which he was remarkable upon every similar occasion. But on inquiry into the matter, he found that the scheme was not likely to be soon carried into execution; the profits arising from the Clarendon Press being, from some mismanagement, very scanty. This having been explained to him by a respectable dignitary of the church, who had good means of knowing it, he wrote a letter upon the subject, which at once exhibits his extraordinary precision and acuteness, and his warm attachment to his *Alma Mater*.

TO THE REV. DR. WETHERELL, MASTER OF UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE, OXFORD

‘DEAR SIR,—Few things are more unpleasant than the transaction of business with men who are above knowing or caring what they have to do; such as the trustees for Lord Cornbury’s institution will, perhaps, appear, when you read Dr. —’s letter.

‘The last part of the Doctor’s letter is of great importance. The complaint¹ which he makes I have heard long ago, and did not know but it was redressed. It is unhappy that a practice so erroneous has not been altered; for altered it must be, or our press will be useless with all its privileges. The booksellers, who, like all other men, have strong prejudices in their own favour, are enough inclined to think the practice of printing and selling books by any but themselves, an encroachment on the rights of their fraternity; and have need of stronger inducements to circulate academical publications than those of another; for, of that mutual co-operation by which the general trade is carried on, the University can bear no part. Of those whom he neither loves nor fears, and from whom he expects no reciprocation of good offices, why should any man promote the interest but for profit? I suppose, with all our scholastic ignorance of mankind, we are still too knowing to expect that the booksellers will erect themselves into patrons, and buy and sell under the influence of a disinterested zeal for the promotion of learning.

‘To the booksellers, if we look for either honour or profit from our press, not only their common profit, but something more must be allowed; and if books, printed at Oxford, are expected to be rated at a high price, that price must be levied on the public, and paid by the ultimate purchaser, not by the intermediate agents. What price shall be set upon the book, is, to the booksellers, wholly indifferent, provided that they gain a proportionate profit by negotiating the sale.

‘Why books printed at Oxford should be particularly dear,

¹ I suppose the complaint was that the trustees of the Oxford press did not allow the London booksellers a sufficient profit upon vending their publications.

I am, however, unable to find. We pay no rent; we inherit many of our instruments and materials; lodging and victuals are cheaper than at London; and, therefore, workmanship ought, at least, not to be dearer. Our expenses are naturally less than those of booksellers; and in most cases, communities are content with less profit than individuals.

‘It is, perhaps, not considered through how many hands a book often passes, before it comes into those of the reader; or what part of the profit each hand must retain, as a motive for transmitting it to the next.

‘We will call our primary agent in London, Mr. Cadell, who receives our books from us, gives them room in his warehouse, and issues them on demand; by him they are sold to Mr. Dilly, a wholesale bookseller, who sends them into the country; and the last seller is the country bookseller. Here are three profits to be paid between the printer and the reader, or, in the style of commerce, between the manufacturer and the consumer; and if any of these profits is too penuriously distributed, the process of commerce is interrupted.

‘We are now come to the practical question, What is to be done? You will tell me, with reason, that I have said nothing till I declare how much, according to my opinion, of the ultimate price ought to be distributed through the whole succession of sale.

‘The deduction, I am afraid, will appear very great: but let it be considered before it is refused. We must allow, for profit, between thirty and thirty-five *per cent.*—between six and seven shillings in the pound; that is, for every book which costs the last buyer twenty shillings, we must charge Mr. Cadell with something less than fourteen. We must set the copies at fourteen shillings each, and superadd what is called the quarterly book, or for every hundred books so charged we must deliver a hundred and four.

‘The profits will then stand thus:

‘Mr. Cadell, who runs no hazard, and gives no credit, will be paid for warehouse room and attendance by a shilling profit on each book, and his chance of the quarterly book.

‘Mr. Dilly, who buys the book for fifteen shillings, and who will expect the quarterly book if he takes five-and-twenty, will send it to his country customer at sixteen and sixpence,

by which, at the hazard of loss, and the certainty of long credit, he gains the regular profit of ten *per cent.*, which is expected in the wholesale trade.

‘The country bookseller, buying at sixteen and sixpence, and commonly trusting a considerable time, gains but three and sixpence, and if he trusts a year, not much more than two and sixpence; otherwise than as he may, perhaps, take as long credit as he gives.

‘With less profit than this, and more you see he cannot have, the country bookseller cannot live; for his receipts are small, and his debts sometimes bad.

‘Thus, dear sir, I have been incited by Dr. ——’s letter to give you a detail of the circulation of books, which, perhaps, every man has not had opportunity of knowing; and which those who know it, do not, perhaps, always distinctly consider.—I am, etc.

SAM. JOHNSON.¹

March 12, 1776.’

Having arrived in London late on Friday, the 15th of March, I hastened next morning to wait on Dr. Johnson, at his house; but found he was removed from Johnson’s Court, No. 7, to Bolt Court, No. 8, still keeping to his favourite Fleet Street. My reflection at the time upon this change, as marked in my Journal, is as follows: ‘I felt a foolish regret that he had left a court which bore his name;² but it was not foolish to be affected with some tenderness of regard for a place in which I had seen him a great deal, from whence I had often issued a better and a happier man than when I went in, and which had often appeared to my imagination, while I trod its pavement, in the

¹ I am happy in giving this full and clear statement to the public, to vindicate, by the authority of the greatest author of his age, that respectable body of men, the booksellers of London, from vulgar reflections, as if their profits were exorbitant, when, in truth, Dr. Johnson has here allowed them more than they usually demand.

² He said, when in Scotland, that he was *Johnson of that ilk*.

solemn darkness of the night, to be sacred to wisdom and piety.' Being informed that he was at Mr. Thrale's, in the Borough, I hastened thither, and found Mrs. Thrale and him at breakfast. I was kindly welcomed. In a moment he was in a full glow of conversation, and I felt myself elevated as if brought into another state of being. Mrs. Thrale and I looked to each other while he talked, and our looks expressed our congenial admiration and affection for him. I shall ever recollect this scene with great pleasure. I exclaimed to her, 'I am now, intellectually, *Hermippus redivivus*,¹ I am quite restored by him, by transfusion of *mind*.' 'There are many (she replied) who admire and respect Mr. Johnson ; but you and I *love* him.'

He seemed very happy in the near prospect of going to Italy with Mr. and Mrs. Thrale. 'But (said he), before leaving England I am to take a jaunt to Oxford, Birmingham, my native city Lichfield, and my old friend, Dr. Taylor's, at Ashbourne, in Derbyshire. I shall go in a few days, and you, Boswell, shall go with me.' I was ready to accompany him ; being willing even to leave London to have the pleasure of his conversation.

I mentioned with much regret the extravagance of the representative of a great family in Scotland, by which there was danger of its being ruined ; and as Johnson respected it for its antiquity, he joined with me in thinking it would be happy if this person should die. Mrs. Thrale seemed shocked at this, as feudal barbarity ; and said, 'I do not understand this preference of the estate to its owner ; of the land to the

¹ See vol. ii. p. 82.

man who walks upon that land.' JOHNSON: 'Nay, madam, it is not a preference of the land to its owner; it is the preference of a family to an individual. Here is an establishment in a country, which is of importance for ages, not only to the chief but to his people; an establishment which extends upwards and downwards; that this should be destroyed by one idle fellow is a sad thing.'

He said, 'Entails are good, because it is good to preserve in a country, serieses of men, to whom the people are accustomed to look up as to their leaders. But I am for leaving a quantity of land in commerce, to excite industry, and keep money in the country; for if no land were to be bought in the country, there would be no encouragement to acquire wealth, because a family could not be founded there; or if it were acquired, it must be carried away to another country where land may be bought. And although the land in every country will remain the same, and be as fertile where there is no money as where there is, yet all that portion of the happiness of civil life, which is produced by money circulating in a country, will be lost.' BOSWELL: 'Then, sir, would it be for the advantage of a country that all its lands were sold at once?' JOHNSON: 'So far, sir, as money produces good, it would be an advantage; for then that country would have as much money circulating in it as it is worth. But to be sure this would be counterbalanced by disadvantages attending a total change of proprietors.'

I expressed my opinion that the power of entailing should be limited thus: 'That there should be one third, or perhaps one half of the land of a country

kept free from commerce; that the proportion allowed to be entailed should be parcelled out so that no family could entail above a certain quantity. Let a family, according to the abilities of its representatives, be richer or poorer in different generations, or always rich if its representatives be always wise: but let its absolute permanency be moderate. In this way we should be certain of there being always a number of established roots; and as in the course of nature, there is in every age an extinction of some families, there would be continual openings for men ambitious of perpetuity, to plant a stock in the entail ground.’¹ JOHNSON: ‘Why, sir, mankind will be better able to regulate the system of entails, when the evil of too much land being locked up by them is felt, than we can do at present when it is not felt.’

I mentioned Dr. Adam Smith’s book on *The Wealth of Nations*, which was just published, and that Sir John Pringle had observed to me, that Dr. Smith, who had never been in trade, could not be expected to write well on that subject any more than a lawyer upon physic. JOHNSON: ‘He is mistaken, sir: a man who has never been engaged in trade himself may undoubtedly write well upon trade, and there is nothing which requires more to be illustrated by philosophy than trade does. As to mere wealth, that is to say, money, it is clear that one nation

¹ The privilege of perpetuating in a family an estate and arms *indefeasibly* from generation to generation, is enjoyed by none of his Majesty’s subjects except in Scotland, where the legal fiction of *fine* and *recovery* is unknown. It is a privilege so proud, that I should think it would be proper to have the exercise of it dependent on the royal prerogative. It seems absurd to permit the power of perpetuating their representation, to men who, having had no eminent merit, have truly no name. The King, as the impartial father of his people, would never refuse to grant the privilege to those who deserved it.

or one individual cannot increase its store but by making another poorer: but trade procures what is more valuable, the reciprocation of the peculiar advantages of different countries. A merchant seldom thinks but of his own particular trade. To write a good book upon it, a man must have extensive views. It is not necessary to have practised to write well upon a subject.' I mentioned law as a subject on which no man could write well without practice. JOHNSON: 'Why, sir, in England, where so much money is to be got by the practice of the law, most of our writers upon it have been in practice; though Blackstone had not been much in practice when he published his *Commentaries*. But upon the Continent, the great writers on law have not all been in practice: Grotius, indeed was; but Puffendorff was not, Burlamaqui was not.'

When we had talked of the great consequence which a man acquired by being employed in his profession, I suggested a doubt of the justice of the general opinion, that it is improper in a lawyer to solicit employment; for why, I urged, should it not be equally allowable to solicit that as the means of consequence, as it is to solicit votes to be elected a member of Parliament? Mr. Strahan had told me that a countryman of his and mine, who had risen to eminence in the law, had, when first making his way, solicited him to get him employed in city causes. JOHNSON: 'Sir, it is wrong to stir up lawsuits; but when once it is certain that a lawsuit is to go on, there is nothing wrong in a lawyer's endeavouring that he shall have the benefit rather than another.' BOSWELL: 'You would not solicit employment, sir, if

you were a lawyer.' JOHNSON: 'No, sir; but not because I should think it wrong, but because I should disdain it.' This was a good distinction, which will be felt by men of just pride. He proceeded: 'However, I would not have a lawyer to be wanting to himself in using fair means. I would have him to inject a little hint now and then, to prevent his being overlooked.'

Lord Mountstuart's bill for a Scotch militia, in supporting which his Lordship had made an able speech in the House of Commons, was now a pretty general topic of conversation. JOHNSON: 'As Scotland contributes so little land-tax towards the general support of the nation, it ought not to have a militia paid out of the general fund, unless it should be thought for the general interest, that Scotland should be protected from an invasion, which no man can think will happen; for what enemy would invade Scotland, where there is nothing to be got? No, sir; now that the Scotch have not the pay of English soldiers spent among them, as so many troops are sent abroad, they are trying to get money another way, by having a militia paid. If they are afraid, and seriously desire to have an armed force to defend them, they should pay for it. Your scheme is to retain a part of your land-tax, by making us pay and clothe your militia.' BOSWELL: 'You should not talk of *we* and *you*, sir: there is now a *Union*.' JOHNSON: 'There must be a distinction of interest, while the proportions of land-tax are so unequal. If Yorkshire should say, "Instead of paying our land-tax, we will keep a greater number of militia," it would be unreasonable.' In this argument my friend was certainly

in the wrong. The land-tax is so unequally proportioned between different parts of England, as between England and Scotland; nay, it is considerably unequal in Scotland itself. But the land-tax is but a small part of the numerous branches of public revenue, all of which Scotland pays precisely as England does. A French invasion made in Scotland would soon penetrate into England.

He thus discoursed upon supposed obligation in settling estates: 'Where a man gets the unlimited property of an estate, there is no obligation upon him in *justice* to leave it to one person rather than to another. There is a motive of preference from *kindness*, and this kindness is generally entertained for the nearest relation. If I *owe* a particular man a sum of money, I am obliged to let that man have the next money I get, and cannot in justice let another have it: but if I owe money to no man, I may dispose of what I get as I please. There is not a *debitum justitiæ* to a man's next heir; there is only *debitum caritatis*. It is plain, then, that I have morally a choice, according to my liking. If I have a brother in want, he has a claim from affection to my assistance; but if I have also a brother in want, whom I like better, he has a preferable claim. The right of an heir-at-law is only this, that he is to have the succession to an estate, in case no other person is appointed to it by the owner. His right is merely preferable to that of the King.'

We got into a boat to cross over to Blackfriars; and as we moved along the Thames, I talked to him of a little volume, which, altogether unknown to him, was advertised to be published in a few days, under

the title of *Johnsoniana* ; or, *Bon Mots of Dr. Johnson*.

JOHNSON : ‘Sir, it is a mighty impudent thing.’

BOSWELL : ‘Pray, sir, could you have no redress if you were to prosecute a publisher for bringing out, under your name, what you never said, and ascribing to you dull, stupid nonsense, or making you swear profanely, as many ignorant relaters of your *bon mots* do?’

JOHNSON : ‘No, sir ; there will always be some truth mixed with the falsehood, and how can it be ascertained how much is true and how much is false? Besides, sir, what damages would a jury give me for having been represented as swearing?’

BOSWELL : ‘I think, sir, you should at least disavow such a publication, because the world and posterity might with much plausible foundation say, “Here is a volume which was publicly advertised and came out in Dr. Johnson’s own time, and, by his silence, was admitted by him to be genuine.”’

JOHNSON : ‘I shall give myself no trouble about the matter.’

He was, perhaps, above suffering from such spurious publications ; but I could not help thinking, that many men would be much injured in their reputation, by having absurd and vicious sayings imputed to them ; and that redress ought in such cases to be given.

He said, ‘The value of every story depends on its being true. A story is a picture either of an individual or of human nature in general : if it be false, it is a picture of nothing. For instance, suppose a man should tell that Johnson, before setting out for Italy, as he had to cross the Alps, sat down to make himself wings. This many people would believe ; but it would be a picture of nothing. — (naming a

worthy friend of ours) used to think a story, a story, till I showed him that truth was essential to it.' I observed, that Foote entertained us with stories which were not true; but that, indeed, it was properly not as narratives that Foote's stories pleased us, but as collections of ludicrous images. JOHNSON: 'Foote is quite impartial, for he tells lies of everybody.'

The importance of strict and scrupulous veracity cannot be too often inculcated. Johnson was known to be so rigidly attentive to it, that even in his common conversation the slightest circumstance was mentioned with exact precision. The knowledge of his having such a principle and habit made his friends have a perfect reliance on the truth of everything that he told, however it might have been doubted if told by many others. As an instance of this, I may mention an odd incident which he related as having happened to him one night in Fleet Street. 'A gentlewoman (said he) begged I would give her my arm to assist her in crossing the street, which I accordingly did; upon which she offered me a shilling, supposing me to be the watchman. I perceived that she was somewhat in liquor.' This, if told by most people, would have been thought an invention; when told by Johnson, it was believed by his friends as much as if they had seen what passed.

We landed at the Temple Stairs, where we parted.

I found him in the evening in Mrs. Williams's room. We talked of religious orders. He said, 'It is as unreasonable for a man to go into a Carthusian convent for fear of being immoral, as for a man to cut off his hands for fear he should steal. There is, indeed, great resolution in the immediate act of dismembering

himself; but when that is once done, he has no longer any merit: for though it is out of his power to steal, yet he may all his life be a thief in his heart. So when a man has once become a Carthusian, he is obliged to continue so, whether he chooses it or not. Their silence, too, is absurd. We read in the Gospel of the apostles being sent to preach, but not to hold their tongues. All severity that does not tend to increase good, or prevent evil, is idle. I said to the Lady Abbess of a convent, "Madame, you are here, not for the love of virtue, but the fear of vice." She said, "She should remember this as long as she lived." I thought it hard to give her this view of her situation, when she could not help it; and, indeed, I wondered at the whole of what he now said; because, both in his *Rambler* and *Idler*, he treats religious austerities with much solemnity of respect.

Finding him still persevering in his abstinence from wine, I ventured to speak to him of it. JOHNSON: 'Sir, I have no objection to a man's drinking wine, if he can do it in moderation. I found myself apt to go to excess in it, and therefore, after having been for some time without it, on account of illness, I thought it better not to return to it. Every man is to judge for himself, according to the effects which he experiences. One of the fathers tells us, he found fasting made him so peevish that he did not practise it.'

Though he often enlarged upon the evil of intoxication, he was by no means harsh and unforgiving to those who indulged in occasional excess of wine. One of his friends, I well remember, came to sup at a tavern with him and some other gentlemen, and too

plainly discovered that he had drunk too much at dinner. When one who loved mischief, thinking to produce a severe censure, asked Johnson, a few days afterwards, ‘Well, sir, what did your friend say to you, as an apology for being in such a situation?’ Johnson answered, ‘Sir, he said all that a man *should* say: he said he was sorry for it.’

I heard him once give a very judicious practical advice upon this subject: ‘A man who has been drinking wine at all freely, should never go into a new company. With those who have partaken wine with him, he may be pretty well in unison; but he will probably be offensive, or appear ridiculous, to other people.’

He allowed very great influence to education. ‘I do not deny, sir, but there is some original difference in minds; but it is nothing in comparison of what is formed by education. We may instance the science of *numbers*, which all minds are equally capable of attaining: yet we find a prodigious difference in the powers of different men, in that respect, after they are grown up, because their minds have been more or less exercised in it: and I think the same cause will explain the difference of excellence in other things, gradations admitting always some difference in the first principles.’

This is a difficult subject; but it is best to hope that diligence may do a great deal. We are *sure* of what it can do, in increasing our mechanical force and dexterity.

I again visited him on Monday. He took occasion to enlarge, as he often did, upon the wretchedness of a sea-life. ‘A ship is worse than a jail. There is, in

a jail, better air, better company, better conveniency of every kind; and a ship has the additional disadvantage of being in danger. When men come to like a sea-life, they are not fit to live on land.' 'Then (said I) it would be cruel in a father to breed his son to the sea.' JOHNSON: 'It would be cruel, in a father who thinks as I do. Men go to sea before they know the unhappiness of that way of life; and when they have come to know it, they cannot escape from it, because it is then too late to choose another profession; as indeed is generally the case with men when they have once engaged in any particular way of life.'

On Tuesday, March 19, which was fixed for our proposed jaunt, we met in the morning at the Somerset coffee-house in the Strand, where we were taken up by the Oxford coach. He was accompanied by Mr. Gwyn, the architect; and a gentleman of Merton College, whom we did not know, had the fourth seat. We soon got into conversation; for it was very remarkable of Johnson, that the presence of a stranger had no restraint upon his talk. I observed that Garrick, who was about to quit the stage, would soon have an easier life. JOHNSON: 'I doubt that, sir.' BOSWELL: 'Why, sir, he will be Atlas with the burden off his back.' JOHNSON: 'But I know not, sir, if he will be so steady without his load. However, he should never play any more, but be entirely the gentleman, and not partly the player: he should no longer subject himself to be hissed by a mob, or to be insolently treated by performers, whom he used to rule with a high hand, and who would gladly retaliate.' BOSWELL: 'I think he should play once a year for the benefit of decayed actors, as it has been

said he means to do.' JOHNSON : 'Alas, sir ! he will soon be a decayed actor himself.'

Johnson expressed his disapprobation of ornamental architecture, such as magnificent columns supporting a portico, or expensive 'pilasters supporting merely their own capitals, 'because it consumes labour disproportionate to its utility.' For the same reason he satirised statuary. 'Painting (said he) consumes labour not disproportionate to its effect ; but a fellow will hack half a year at a block of marble to make something in stone that hardly resembles a man. The value of statuary is owing to its difficulty. You would not value the finest head cut upon a carrot.' Here he seemed to me to be strangely deficient in taste ; for surely statuary is a noble art of imitation, and preserves a wonderful expression of the varieties of the human frame ; and although it must be allowed that the circumstances of difficulty enhance the value of a marble head, we should consider, that if it requires a long time in the performance, it has a proportionate value in durability.

Gwyn was a fine lively, rattling fellow. Dr. Johnson kept him in subjection, but with a kindly authority. The spirit of the artist, however, rose against what he thought a Gothic attack, and he made a brisk defence. 'What, sir, will you allow no value to beauty in architecture or in statuary ? Why should we allow it, then, in writing ? Why do you take the trouble to give us so many fine allusions, and bright images, and elegant phrases ? You might convey all your instruction without these ornaments.' Johnson smiled with complacency ; but said, 'Why, sir, all these ornaments are useful, because they obtain an easier

reception for truth ; but a building is not at all more convenient for being decorated with superfluous carved work.'

Gwyn at last was lucky enough to make one reply to Dr. Johnson, which he allowed to be excellent. Johnson censured him for taking down a church which might have stood many years, and building a new one at a different place, for no other reason but that there might be a direct road to a new bridge ; and his expression was, 'You are taking a church out of the way, that the people may go in a straight line to the bridge.' 'No, sir (said Gwyn), I am putting the church *in* the way, that the people may not *go out of the way*.' JOHNSON (with a hearty laugh of approbation) : 'Speak no more. Rest your colloquial fame upon this.'

Upon our arrival at Oxford, Dr. Johnson and I went directly to University College, but were disappointed on finding that one of the fellows, his friend Mr. Scott, who accompanied him from Newcastle to Edinburgh, was gone to the country. We put up at the Angel Inn, and passed the evening by ourselves in easy and familiar conversation. Talking of constitutional melancholy, he observed, 'A man so afflicted, sir, must divert distressing thoughts, and not combat with them.' BOSWELL : 'May not he think them down, sir?' JOHNSON : 'No, sir. To attempt to *think them down* is madness. He should have a lamp constantly burning in his bed-chamber during the night, and if wakefully disturbed, take a book and read, and compose himself to rest. To have the management of the mind is a great art, and it may be attained in a considerable degree by experience and habitual exercise.'

BOSWELL: 'Should not he provide amusements for himself? Would it not, for instance, be right for him to take a course of chemistry?' JOHNSON: 'Let him take a course of chemistry, or a course of rope-dancing, or a course of anything to which he is inclined at the time. Let him contrive to have as many retreats for his mind as he can, as many things to which it can fly from itself. Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* is a valuable work. It is, perhaps, overloaded with quotation. But there is a great spirit and great power in what Burton says, when he writes from his own mind.'

Next morning we visited Dr. Wetherell, Master of University College, with whom Dr. Johnson conferred on the most advantageous mode of disposing of the books printed at the Clarendon press, on which subject his letter has been inserted in a former page. I often had occasion to remark, Johnson loved business, loved to have his wisdom actually operate on real life. Dr. Wetherell and I talked of him without reserve in his own presence. WETHERELL: 'I would have given him a hundred guineas if he would have written a preface to his *Political Tracts*, by way of a discourse on the British Constitution.' BOSWELL: 'Dr. Johnson, though in his writings, and upon all occasions, a great friend to the constitution, both in church and state, has never written expressly in support of either. There is really a claim upon him for both. I am sure he could give a volume of no great bulk upon each, which would comprise all the substance, and with his spirit would effectually maintain them. He should erect a fort on the confines of each.' I could perceive that he was displeased with this dialogue. He burst

out, 'Why should *I* be always writing?' I hoped he was conscious that the debt was just, and meant to discharge it, though he disliked being dunned.

We then went to Pembroke College, and waited on his old friend Dr. Adams, the master of it, whom I found to be a most polite, pleasing, communicative man. Before his advancement to the headship of his college, I had intended to go and visit him at Shrewsbury, where he was rector of St. Chad's, in order to get from him what particulars he could recollect of Johnson's academical life. He now obligingly gave part of that authentic information, which with what I afterwards owed to his kindness, will be found incorporated in its proper place in this work.

Dr. Adams had distinguished himself by an able answer to David Hume's *Essay on Miracles*. He told me he had once dined in company with Hume in London: that Hume shook hands with him, and said, 'You have treated me much better than I deserve'; and that they exchanged visits. I took the liberty to object to treating an infidel writer with smooth civility. Where there is a controversy concerning a passage in a classic author, or concerning a question in antiquities, or any other subject in which human happiness is not deeply interested, a man may treat his antagonist with politeness and even respect. But where the controversy is concerning the truth of religion, it is of such vast importance to him who maintains it, to obtain the victory, that the person of an opponent ought not to be spared. If a man firmly believes that religion is an invaluable treasure, he will consider a writer who endeavours to deprive mankind of it as a *robber*; he will look upon him as

odious, though the infidel might think himself in the right. A robber who reasons as the gang do in the *Beggar's Opera*, who call themselves *practical* philosophers, and may have as much sincerity as pernicious *speculative* philosophers, is not the less an object of just indignation. An abandoned profligate may think that it is not wrong to debauch my wife; but shall I, therefore, not detest him? and if I catch him in making an attempt, shall I treat him with politeness? No, I will kick him down-stairs, or run him through the body; that is, if I really love my wife, or have a true rational notion of honour. An infidel then shall not be treated handsomely by a Christian, merely because he endeavours to rob with ingenuity. I do declare, however, that I am exceedingly unwilling to be provoked to anger, and could I be persuaded that truth would not suffer from a cool moderation in its defenders, I should wish to preserve good humour, at least, in every controversy; nor, indeed, do I see why a man should lose his temper while he does all he can to refute an opponent. I think ridicule may be fairly used against an infidel; for instance, if he be an ugly fellow, and yet absurdly vain of his person, we may contrast his appearance with Cicero's beautiful image of Virtue, could she be seen. Johnson coincided with me and said, 'When a man voluntarily engages in an important controversy, he is to do all he can to lessen his antagonist, because authority from personal respect has much weight with most people, and often more than reasoning. If my antagonist writes bad language, though that may not be essential to the question, I will attack him for his bad language.' ADAMS: 'You would not jostle a chimney-sweeper.'

JOHNSON: 'Yes, sir, if it were necessary to jostle him down.'

Dr. Adams told us, that in some of the colleges at Oxford, the fellows had excluded the students from social intercourse with them in the common room.

JOHNSON: 'They are in the right, sir: there can be no real conversation, no fair exertion of mind amongst them, if the young men are by; for a man who has a character does not choose to stake it in their presence.'

BOSWELL: 'But, sir, may there not be very good conversation without a contest for superiority?' JOHN-

SON: 'No animated conversation, sir, for it cannot be but one or other will come off superior. I do not mean that the victor must have the better of the argument, for he may take the weak side; but his superiority of parts and knowledge will necessarily appear: and he to whom he thus shows himself superior is lessened in the eyes of the young men. You know it was said "*Mallem cum Scaligero errare quam cum Clavio recte sapere.*" In the same manner take Bentley's and Giasone de Nores' comments upon Horace, you will admire Bentley more when wrong, than Giasone when right.'

We walked with Dr. Adams into the master's garden, and into the common room. JOHNSON (after a reverie of meditation): 'Ay! here I used to play at draughts with Phil. Jones and Fludyer. Jones loved beer, and did not get very forward in the church. Fludyer turned out a scoundrel, a Whig, and said he was ashamed of having been bred at Oxford. He had a living at Putney, and got under the eye of some retainers to the court at that time, and so became a violent Whig: but he had been a scoundrel all along,

to be sure.' BOSWELL: 'Was he a scoundrel, sir, in any other way than that of being a political scoundrel? Did he cheat at draughts?' JOHNSON: 'Sir, we never played for *money*.'

He then carried me to visit a Dr. Bentham, canon of Christ Church, and divinity professor, with whose learned and lively conversation we were much pleased. He gave us an invitation to dinner, which Dr. Johnson told me was a high honour. 'Sir, it is a great thing to dine with the canons of Christ Church.' We could not accept his invitation, as we were engaged to dine at University College. We had an excellent dinner there, with the masters and fellows, it being St. Cuthbert's day, which is kept by them as a festival, as he was a saint of Durham, with which this college is much connected.

We drank tea with Dr. Horne, late President of Magdalen College, and Bishop of Norwich, of whose abilities, in different respects, the public has had eminent proofs, and the esteem annexed to whose character was increased by knowing him personally. He had talked of publishing an edition of Walton's *Lives*, but had laid aside that design upon Dr. Johnson's telling him, from mistake, that Lord Hailes intended to do it. I had wished to negotiate between Lord Hailes and him, that one or other should perform so good a work. JOHNSON: 'In order to do it well, it will be necessary to collect all the editions of Walton's *Lives*. By way of adapting the book to the taste of the present age, they have, in a late edition, left out a vision which he relates Dr. Donne had, but it should be restored; and there should be a critical catalogue given of the works of the different

persons whose lives were written by Walton, and therefore their works must be carefully read by the editor.'

We then went to Trinity College, where he introduced me to Mr. Thomas Warton, with whom we passed a part of the evening. We talked of biography. JOHNSON: 'It is rarely well executed. They only who live with a man can write his life with any genuine exactness and discrimination; and few people who have lived with a man know what to remark about him. The chaplain of a late bishop, whom I was to assist in writing some memoirs of his lordship, could tell me scarcely anything.'¹

I said Mr. Robert Dodsley's life should be written, as he had been so much connected with the wits of his time, and by his literary merit had raised himself from the station of a footman. Mr. Warton said he had published a little volume under the title of *The Muse in Livery*. JOHNSON: 'I doubt whether Dodsley's brother would thank a man who should write his life; yet Dodsley himself was not unwilling that his original low condition should be recollected. When Lord Lyttelton's *Dialogues of the Dead* came out, one of which is between Apicius, an ancient epicure, and Dartineuf, a modern epicure, Dodsley said to me, "I knew Dartineuf well, for I was once his footman."'

Biography led us to speak of Dr. John Campbell, who had written a considerable part of the *Biographia*

¹ It has been mentioned to me by an accurate English friend, that Dr. Johnson could never have used the phrase *almost nothing*, as not being English; and therefore I have put another in its place. At the same time, I am not quite convinced it is not good English. For the best writers use this phrase '*little or nothing*'; i.e. almost so little as to be nothing.

Britannica. Johnson, though he valued him highly, was of opinion that there was not so much in his great work, *A Political Survey of Great Britain*, as the world had been taught to expect ;¹ and had said to me that he believed Campbell's disappointment on account of the bad success of that work had killed him. He this evening observed of it, 'That work was his death.' Mr. Warton, not adverting to his meaning, answered, 'I believe so ; from the great attention he bestowed on it.' JOHNSON : 'Nay, sir, he died of *want* of attention, if he died at all by that book.'

We talked of a work much in vogue at that time, written in a very mellifluous style, but which, under pretext of another subject, contained much artful infidelity.² I said it was not fair to attack us unexpectedly ; he should have warned us of our danger before we entered his garden of flowery eloquence, by advertising, 'Spring-guns and men-traps set here.' The author had been an Oxonian, and was remembered there for having 'turned Papist.' I observed that as he had changed several times—from the Church of England to the Church of Rome—from the Church of Rome to infidelity—I did not despair yet of seeing him a Methodist preacher. JOHNSON (laughing): 'It is said that his range has been more extensive, and that he has once been Mohammedan. However, now that he has published his infidelity, he will probably persist in it.' BOSWELL : 'I am not quite sure of that, sir.'

I mentioned Sir Richard Steel having published his *Christian Hero*, with the avowed purpose of obliging

¹ Yet surely it is a very useful work, and of wonderful research and labour for one man to have executed.

² [The first volume of *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*.—A. B.]

himself to lead a religious life ; yet, that his conduct was by no means strictly suitable. JOHNSON : ‘ Steele, I believe, practised the lighter vices.’

Mr. Warton being engaged, could not sup with us at our inn ; we had therefore another evening by ourselves. I asked Johnson, whether a man’s being forward to make himself known to eminent people, and seeing as much of life, and getting as much information as he could in every way, was not yet lessening himself by his forwardness. JOHNSON : ‘ No, sir ; a man always makes himself greater as he increases his knowledge.’

I censured some ludicrous fantastic dialogues between two coach-horses, and other such stuff, which Baretti had lately published. He joined with me, and said, ‘ Nothing odd will do long. *Tristram Shandy* did not last.’ I expressed a desire to be acquainted with a lady who had been much talked of, and universally celebrated for extraordinary address and insinuation. JOHNSON : ‘ Never believe extraordinary characters which you hear of people. Depend upon it, sir, they are exaggerated. You do not see one man shoot a great deal higher than another.’ I mentioned Mr. Burke. JOHNSON : ‘ Yes, Burke *is* an extraordinary man. His stream of mind is perpetual.’ It is very pleasing to me to record that Johnson’s high estimation of the talents of this gentleman was uniform from their early acquaintance. Sir Joshua Reynolds informs me that when Mr. Burke was first elected a member of Parliament, and Sir John Hawkins expressed a wonder at his attaining a seat, Johnson said, ‘ Now, we who know Mr. Burke, know that he will be one of the first men in the country.’ And once, when

Johnson was ill, and unable to exert himself as much as usual without fatigue, Mr. Burke having been mentioned, he said, 'That fellow calls forth all my powers. Were I to see Burke now it would kill me.' So much was he accustomed to consider conversation as a contest, and such was his notion of Burke as an opponent.

Next morning, Thursday, March 21, we set out in a post-chaise to pursue our ramble. It was a delightful day, and we rode through Blenheim Park. When I looked at the magnificent bridge built by John, Duke of Marlborough, over a small rivulet, and recollected the epigram made upon it :

'The lofty arch his high ambition shows,
The stream an emblem of his bounty flows':

and saw that now, by the genius of Brown, a magnificent body of water was collected, I said, 'They have *drowned* the epigram.' I observed to him, while in the midst of that noble scene around us, 'You and I, sir, have, I think, seen together the extremes of what can be seen in Britain—the wild, rough island of Mull, and Blenheim Park.'

We dined at an excellent inn at Chapelhouse, where he expatiated on the felicity of England in its taverns and inns, and triumphed over the French for not having in any perfection the tavern life. 'There is no private house (said he) in which people can enjoy themselves so well as in a capital tavern. Let there be ever so great plenty of good things, ever so much grandeur, ever so much elegance, ever so much desire that everybody should be easy ; in the nature of things it cannot be : there must always be some degree of care and anxiety. The master of the house is anxious

to entertain his guests ; the guests are anxious to be agreeable to him : and no man, but a very impudent dog indeed, can as freely command what is in another man's house, as if it were his own. Whereas, at a tavern, there is a general freedom from anxiety. You are sure you are welcome : and the more noise you make, the more trouble you give, the more good things you call for, the welcomer you are. No servants will attend to you with the alacrity which waiters do, who are incited by the prospect of an immediate reward in proportion as they please. No, sir ; there is nothing which has yet been contrived by man, by which so much happiness is produced as by a good tavern or inn.¹ He then repeated, with great emotion, Shenstone's lines :

‘Whoe’er has travell’d life’s dull round,
Where’er his stages may have been,
May sigh to think he still has found
The warmest welcome at an inn.’²

My illustrious friend, I thought, did not sufficiently

¹ Sir John Hawkins has preserved very few *Memorabilia* of Johnson. There is, however, to be found, in his bulky tome, a very excellent one upon this subject. ‘In contradiction to those, who, having a wife and children, prefer domestic enjoyments to those which a tavern affords, I have heard him assert, *that a tavern chair was the throne of human felicity.*—“As soon (said he) as I enter the door of a tavern, I experience an oblivion of care, and of freedom from solicitude : when I am seated, I find the master courteous, and the servants obsequious to my call ; anxious to know and ready to supply my wants : wine there exhilarates my spirits, and prompts me to free conversation and an interchange of discourse with those whom I most love : I dogmatise and am contradicted, and in this conflict of opinion and sentiments I find delight.”’

² We happened to lie this night at the inn at Henley, where Shenstone wrote those lines.*

* I give them as they are found in the corrected edition of his works, published after his death. In Dodsley's collection the stanza runs thus :

‘Whoe’er has travell’d life’s dull round,
Whate’er *his various tour* has been,
May sigh to think *how oft* he found
His warmest welcome at an inn.’

admire Shenstone. That ingenious and elegant gentleman's opinion of Johnson appears in one of his letters to Mr. Greaves, dated Feb. 9, 1760. 'I have lately been reading one or two volumes of the *Rambler*; who, excepting against some few hardnesses in his manner, and the want of more examples to enliven, is one of the most nervous, most perspicuous, most concise, most harmonious prose writers I know. A learned diction improves by time.'

In the afternoon, as we were driven rapidly along in the post-chaise, he said to me, 'Life has not many things better than this.'

We stopped at Stratford-upon-Avon, and drank tea and coffee; and it pleased me to be with him upon the classic ground of Shakespeare's native place.

He spoke slightly of Dyer's *Fleece*. 'The subject, sir, cannot be made poetical. How can a man write poetically of serges and druggets! Yet you will hear many people talk to you gravely of that *excellent* poem, *The Fleece*.' Having talked of Grainger's *Sugar Cane*, I mentioned to him Mr. Langton's having told me that this poem, when read in manuscript at Sir Joshua Reynolds's, had made all the assembled wits burst into a laugh, when, after much blank-verse pomp, the poet began a new paragraph thus:

'Now, muse, let's sing of *rats*.'

And what increased the ridicule was, that one of the company, who slyly overlooked the reader, perceived that the word had been originally *mice*, and had been altered *rats*, as more dignified.¹

¹ Such is this little laughable incident, which has been often related. Dr. Percy, the Bishop of Dromore, who was an intimate friend of Dr. Grainger, and has a particular regard for his memory, has communicated to me the following explanation:

This passage does not appear in the printed work ; Dr. Grainger, or some of his friends, it should seem, having become sensible that introducing even *rats* in a grave poem, might be liable to banter. He, however, could not bring himself to relinquish the idea ; for they are thus, in a still more ludicrous manner, periphrastically exhibited in his poem as it now stands :

‘Nor with less waste the whisker’d vermin race,
A countless clan, despoil the lowland cane.’

Johnson said that Dr. Grainger was an agreeable man ; a man that would do any good that was in his power. His translation of Tibullus, he thought, was very well done ; but *The Sugar Cane, a Poem*, did not please him ;¹ for, he exclaimed, ‘What could he make of a sugar cane ? One might as well write “The Parsley-bed, a Poem” ; or, “The Cabbage-garden, a Poem.”’ BOSWELL : ‘You must then *pickle* your cabbage with the *sal atticum*.’ JOHNSON : ‘You know there is already *The Hop Garden, a Poem* : and, I think, one could say a great deal about cabbage. The poem might begin with the advantages of civilised

‘The passage in question was originally not liable to such a perversion : for the author having occasion in that part of his work to mention the havoc made by rats and mice, had introduced the subject in a kind of mock-heroic, and a parody of Homer’s battle of the frogs and mice, invoking the Muse of the old Grecian bard in an elegant and well-turned manner. In that state I had seen it ; but afterwards, unknown to me and other friends, he had been persuaded, contrary to his own better judgment, to alter it, so as to produce the unlucky effect above mentioned.’

The above was written by the Bishop when he had not the poem itself to recur to ; and though the account given was true of it at one period, yet as Dr. Grainger afterwards altered the passage in question, the remarks in the text do not apply to the printed poem.

The Bishop gives this character of Dr. Grainger :—‘He was not only a man of genius and learning, but had many excellent virtues : being one of the most generous, friendly, and benevolent men I ever knew.’

¹ Dr. Johnson said to me, ‘Percy, sir, was angry with me for laughing at the *Sugar Cane* ; for he had a mind to make a great thing of Grainger’s rats.’

society over a rude state, exemplified by the Scotch, who had no cabbages till Oliver Cromwell's soldiers introduced them; and one might thus show how arts are propagated by conquest, as they were by the Roman arms.' He seemed to be much diverted by the fertility of his own fancy.

I told him that I heard Dr. Percy was writing the history of the wolf in Great Britain. JOHNSON: 'The wolf, sir! why the wolf? Why does he not write of the bear, which we had formerly? Nay, it is said we had the beaver. Or why does he not write of the grey rat, the Hanover rat, as it is called, because it is said to have come into this country about the time that the family of Hanover came? I should like to see "*The History of the Grey Rat, by Thomas Percy, D.D., Chaplain in Ordinary to his Majesty*"' (laughing immoderately). BOSWELL: 'I am afraid a Court chaplain could not decently write of the grey rat.' JOHNSON: 'Sir, he need not give it the name of the Hanover rat.' Thus could he indulge a luxuriant sportive imagination when talking of a friend whom he loved and esteemed.

He mentioned to me the singular history of an ingenious acquaintance. 'He had practised physic in various situations with no great emolument. A West India gentleman, whom he delighted by his conversation, gave him a bond for a handsome annuity during his life, on the condition of his accompanying him to the West Indies, and living with him there for two years. He accordingly embarked with the gentleman, but upon the voyage fell in love with a young woman who happened to be one of the passengers, and married the wench. From the imprudence of his disposition

he quarrelled with the gentleman, and declared he would have no connection with him. So he forfeited the annuity. He settled as a physician in one of the Leeward Islands. A man was sent out to him merely to compound his medicines. This fellow set up as a rival to him in his practice of physic, and got so much the better of him in the opinion of the people of the island that he carried away all the business, upon which he returned to England, and soon after died.'

On Friday, March 22, having set out early from Henley, where we had lain the preceding night, we arrived at Birmingham about nine o'clock, and, after breakfast, went to call on his old schoolfellow, Mr. Hector. A very stupid maid, who opened the door, told us that 'her master was gone out; he was gone to the country; she could not tell when he would return.' In short, she gave us a miserable reception; and Johnson observed, 'She would have behaved no better to people who wanted him in the way of his profession.' He said to her, 'My name is Johnson; tell him I called. Will you remember the name?' She answered with rustic simplicity, in the Warwickshire pronunciation, 'I don't understand you, sir.' 'Blockhead (said he), I'll write.' I never heard the word *blockhead* applied to a woman before, though I do not see why it should not, when there is evident occasion for it.¹ He, however, made another attempt

¹ My worthy friend Mr. Langton, to whom I am under innumerable obligations in the course of my Johnsonian history, has furnished me with a droll illustration of this question. An honest carpenter, after giving some anecdote, in his presence, of the ill treatment which he had received from a clergyman's wife, who was a noted termagant, and whom he accused of unjust dealing in some transaction with him, added, 'I took care to let her know what I thought of her.' And being asked, 'What did you say?' answered, 'I told her she was a *scoundrel*.'

to make her understand him, and roared loud in her ear, *Johnson*, and then she caught the sound.

We next called on Mr. Lloyd, one of the people called Quakers. He too was not at home, but Mrs. Lloyd was, and received us courteously, and asked us to dinner. Johnson said to me, 'After the uncertainty of all human things at Hector's, this invitation came very well.' We walked about the town, and he was pleased to see it increasing.

I talked of legitimation by subsequent marriage, which obtained in the Roman law, and still obtains in the law of Scotland. JOHNSON: 'I think it a bad thing; because the chastity of women being of the utmost importance, as all property depends upon it, they who forfeit it should not have any possibility of being restored to good character; nor should the children, by an illicit connection, attain the full right of lawful children, by the posterior consent of the offending parties.' His opinion upon this subject deserves consideration. Upon his principle, there may, at times, be a hardship, and seemingly a strange one, upon individuals; but the general good of society is better secured. And, after all, it is unreasonable in an individual to repine that he has not the advantage of a state which is made different from his own, by the social institution under which he is born. A woman does not complain that her brother, who is younger than her, gets their common father's estate. Why then should a natural son complain that a younger brother, by the same parents lawfully begotten, gets it? The operation of law is similar in both cases. Besides, an illegitimate son, who has a younger legitimate brother by the same father and

mother, has no stronger claim to the father's estate, than if that legitimate brother had only the same father, from whom alone the estate descends.

Mr. Lloyd joined us in the street; and in a little while we met *Friend Hector*, as Mr. Lloyd called him. It gave me pleasure to observe the joy which Johnson and he expressed at seeing each other again. Mr. Lloyd and I left them together, while he obligingly showed me some of the manufactures of this very curious assemblage of artificers. We all met at dinner at Mr. Lloyd's, where we were entertained with great hospitality. Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd had been married the same year with their majesties, and like them had been blessed with a numerous family of fine children, their numbers being exactly the same. Johnson said, 'Marriage is the best state for man in general; and every man is a worse man, in proportion as he is unfit for the married state.'

I have always loved the simplicity of manners, and the spiritual-mindedness of the Quakers; and talking with Mr. Lloyd, I observed, that the essential part of religion was piety, a devout intercourse with the divinity; and that many a man was a Quaker without knowing it.

As Dr. Johnson had said to me in the morning, while we walked together, that he liked individuals among the Quakers, but not the sect; when we were at Mr. Lloyd's, I kept clear of introducing any questions concerning the peculiarities of their faith. But I having asked to look at Baskerville's edition of Barclay's *Apology*, Johnson laid hold of it; and the chapter on baptism happening to open, Johnson remarked, 'He says there is neither precept nor practice

for baptism, in the Scriptures; that is false.' Here he was the aggressor, by no means in a gentle manner; and the good Quakers had the advantage of him; for he had read negligently, and had not observed that Barclay speaks of *infant* baptism; which they calmly made him perceive. Mr. Lloyd, however, was in a great mistake; for when insisting that the rite of baptism by water was to cease, when the *spiritual* administration of Christ began, he maintained, that John the Baptist said, '*My baptism shall decrease, but His shall increase.*' Whereas the words are, '*He must increase, but I must decrease.*'¹

One of them having objected to the 'observance of days, and months, and years,' Johnson answered, 'The church does not superstitiously observe days, merely as days, but as memorials of important facts. Christmas might be kept as well upon one day of the year as another; but there should be a stated day for commemorating the birth of our Saviour, because there is danger that what may be done on any day, will be neglected.'

He said to me at another time, 'Sir, the holidays observed by our church are of great use in religion.' There can be no doubt of this, in a limited sense; I mean if the number of such consecrated portions of time be not too extensive. The excellent Mr. Nelson's *Festivals and Fasts*, which has, I understand, the greatest sale of any book ever printed in England, except the Bible, is a most valuable help to devotion; and in addition to it I would recommend two sermons on the same subject, by Mr. Pott, Archdeacon of St.

¹ John iii. 30.

Alban's, equally distinguished for piety and elegance. I am sorry to have it to say, that Scotland is the only Christian country, Catholic or Protestant, where the great events of our religion are not solemnly commemorated by its ecclesiastical establishment, on days set apart for the purpose.

Mr. Hector was so good as to accompany me to see the great works of Mr. Bolton, at a place which he has called Soho, about two miles from Birmingham, which the very ingenious proprietor showed me himself to the best advantage. I wished Johnson had been with us : for it was a scene which I should have been glad to contemplate by his light. The vastness and the contrivance of some of the machinery would have 'matched his mighty mind.' I shall never forget Mr. Bolton's expression to me. 'I sell here, sir, what all the world desires to have—POWER.' He had about seven hundred people at work. I contemplated him as an *iron chieftain*, and he seemed to be a father to his tribe. One of them came to him, complaining grievously of his landlord for having distrained his goods. 'Your landlord is in the right, Smith (said Bolton). But I'll tell you what: find you a friend who will lay down one half of your rent, and I'll lay down the other half; and you shall have your goods again.'

From Mr. Hector I now learned many particulars of Dr. Johnson's early life, which, with others that he gave me at different times since, have contributed to the formation of this work.

Dr. Johnson said to me in the morning, 'You will see, sir, at Mr. Hector's, his sister, Mrs. Careless, a clergyman's widow. She was the first woman with whom I was in love. It dropped out of my head imper-

ceptibly ; but she and I shall always have a kindness for each other.' He laughed at the notion that a man can never be really in love but once, and considered it as a mere romantic fancy.

On our return from Mr. Bolton's, Mr. Hector took me to his house, where we found Johnson sitting placidly at tea, with his *first love* ; who, though now advanced in years, was a genteel woman, very agreeable and well-bred.

Johnson lamented to Mr. Hector the state of one of their schoolfellows, Mr. Charles Congreve, a clergyman, which he thus described : ' He obtained, I believe, considerable preferment in Ireland, but now lives in London, quite as a valetudinarian, afraid to go into any house but his own. He takes a short airing in his post-chaise every day. He has an elderly woman, whom he calls cousin, who lives with him, and jogs his elbow, when his glass has stood too long empty, and encourages him in drinking, in which he is very willing to be encouraged ; not that he gets drunk, for he is a very pious man, but he is always muddy. He confesses to one bottle of port every day, and he probably drinks more. He is quite unsocial ; his conversation is quite monosyllabical ; and when, at my last visit, I asked him what o'clock it was ? that signal of my departure had so pleasing an effect on him that he sprung up to look at his watch, like a greyhound bounding at a hare.' When Johnson took leave of Mr. Hector, he said, ' Don't grow like Congreve ; nor let me grow like him, when you are near me.'

When he again talked of Mrs. Careless to-night, he seemed to have had his affection revived, for he

said, 'If I had married her, it might have been as happy for me.' BOSWELL: 'Pray, sir, do you not suppose that there are fifty women in the world, with any one of whom a man may be as happy as with any one woman in particular?' JOHNSON: 'Ay, sir, fifty thousand.' BOSWELL: 'Then, sir, you are not of opinion with some who imagine that certain men and certain women are made for each other; and that they cannot be happy if they miss their counterparts?' JOHNSON: 'To be sure not, sir. I believe marriages would in general be as happy, and often more so, if they were all made by the Lord Chancellor, upon a due consideration of the characters and circumstances, without the parties having any choice in the matter.'

I wished to have stayed at Birmingham to-night, to have talked more with Mr. Hector; but my friend was impatient to reach his native city; so we drove on that stage in the dark, and were long pensive and silent. When we came within the focus of the Lichfield lamps, 'Now (said he) we are getting out of a state of death.' We put up at the Three Crowns, not one of the great inns, but a good old-fashioned one, which was kept by Mr. Wilkins, and was the very next house to that in which Johnson was born and brought up, and which was still his own property.¹ We had a comfortable supper, and got into high spirits. I felt all my Toryism glow in this old capital of Staffordshire. I could have offered incense *genio loci*; and I indulged in libations of that ale, which Boniface, in *The*

¹ I went through the house where my illustrious friend was born, with a reverence with which it doubtless will long be visited. An engraved view of it, with the adjacent buildings, is in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for February 1785.

Beaux Stratagem, recommends with such an eloquent jollity.

Next morning he introduced me to Mrs. Lucy Porter, his step-daughter. She was now an old maid, with much simplicity of manner. She had never been in London. Her brother, a captain in the navy, had left her a fortune of ten thousand pounds; about a third of which she had laid out in building a stately house, and making a handsome garden, in an elevated situation in Lichfield. Johnson, when here by himself, used to live at her house. She revered him, and he had parental tenderness for her.

We then visited Mr. Peter Garrick, who had that morning received a letter from his brother David, announcing our coming to Lichfield. He was engaged to dinner, but asked us to tea, and to sleep at his house. Johnson, however, would not quit his old acquaintance Wilkins, of the Three Crowns. The family likeness of the Garricks was very striking; and Johnson thought that David's vivacity was not so peculiar to himself as was supposed. 'Sir (said he), I don't know but if Peter had cultivated all the arts of gaiety as much as David has done, he might have been as brisk and lively. Depend upon it, sir, vivacity is much an art, and depends greatly on habit.' I believe there is a good deal of truth in this, notwithstanding a ludicrous story told me by a lady abroad, of a heavy German baron, who had lived much with the young English at Geneva, and was ambitious to be as lively as they; with which view, he, with assiduous exertion, was jumping over the tables and chairs in his lodgings; and when the people of the house ran in and asked, with surprise,

what was the matter, he answered, '*Sh' apprens l'être fif.*'

We dined at our inn, and had with us a Mr. Jackson, one of Johnson's schoolfellows, whom he treated with much kindness, though he seemed to be a low man, dull and untaught. He had a coarse grey coat, black waistcoat, greasy leather breeches, and yellow, uncurled wig; and his countenance had the ruddiness which betokens one who is in no haste to 'leave his can.' He drank only ale. He had tried to be a cutler at Birmingham, but had not succeeded; and now he lived poorly at home, and had some scheme of dressing leather in a better manner than common: to his indistinct account of which, Dr. Johnson listened with patient attention, that he might assist him with his advice. Here was an instance of genuine humanity and real kindness in this great man, who has been most unjustly represented as altogether harsh and destitute of tenderness. A thousand such instances might have been recorded in the course of his long life; though that his temper was warm and hasty, and his manner often rough, cannot be denied:

I saw here, for the first time, *oat ale*; and oat-cakes, not hard as in Scotland, but soft like a Yorkshire cake, were served at breakfast. It was pleasant to me to find that '*oats*,' the '*food of horses*,' were so much used as the *food of the people* in Dr. Johnson's own town. He expatiated in praise of Lichfield and its inhabitants, who, he said, were 'the most sober, decent people in England, the genteelest in proportion to their wealth, and spoke the purest English.' I doubted as to the last article of this eulogy, for they had several pro-

vincial sounds ; as *there*, pronounced like *fear*, instead of like *fair* ; *once* pronounced *woonse*, instead of *wunse* or *wonse*. Johnson himself never got entirely free of those provincial accents. Garrick sometimes used to take him off, squeezing a lemon into a punch-bowl, with uncouth gesticulations, looking round the company, and calling out, ‘Who’s for *poonsh*?’¹

Very little business appeared to be going forward in Lichfield. I found, however, two strange manufactures for so inland a place—sail-cloth and streamers for ships ; and I observed them making some saddle-cloths, and dressing sheepskins : but upon the whole the busy hand of industry seemed to be quite slackened. ‘Surely, sir (said I), you are an idle set of people.’ ‘Sir (said Johnson), we are a city of philosophers ; we work with our heads, and make the boobies of Birmingham work for us with their hands.’

There was at this time a company of players performing at Lichfield. The manager, Mr. Stanton, sent his compliments, and begged leave to wait on Dr. Johnson. Johnson received him very courteously, and he drank a glass of wine with us. He was a plain, decent, well-behaved man, and expressed his gratitude to Dr. Johnson for having once got him permission from Dr. Taylor at Ashbourne to play there upon moderate terms. Garrick’s name was soon introduced. JOHNSON : ‘Garrick’s conversation is gay and grotesque. It is a dish of all sorts, but all good things. There is no solid meat in it : there is a want of sentiment in

¹ [Garrick himself, like the Lichfieldians, always said—*shupreme*, *shuperior*.—B.]

[This is still the vulgar pronunciation of Ireland, where the pronunciation of the English language is doubtless that which generally prevailed in England in the time of Queen Elizabeth.—M.]

it. Not but that he has sentiment sometimes, and sentiment, too, very powerful and very pleasing ; but it has not its full proportion in his conversation.'

When we were by ourselves he told me, 'Forty years ago, sir, I was in love with an actress here, Mrs. Emmet, who acted Flora in *Hob in the Well*.' What merit this lady had as an actress, or what was her figure or her manner, I have not been informed ; but, if we may believe Mr. Garrick, his old master's taste in theatrical merit was by no means refined ; he was not an *elegans formarum spectator*. Garrick used to tell that Johnson said of an actor, who played Sir Harry Wildair at Lichfield, 'There is a courtly vivacity about the fellow' ; when, in fact, according to Garrick's account, 'he was the most vulgar ruffian that ever went upon boards.'

We had promised Mr. Stanton to be at his theatre on Monday. Dr. Johnson jocularly proposed me to write a Prologue for the occasion : 'A Prologue, by James Boswell, Esq., from the Hebrides.' I was really inclined to take the hint. Methought, 'Prologue, spoken before Dr. Samuel Johnson, at Lichfield, 1776,' would have sounded as well as 'Prologue, spoken before the Duke of York, at Oxford,' in Charles the Second's time. Much might have been said of what Lichfield had done for Shakespeare by producing Johnson and Garrick. But I found he was averse to it.

We went and viewed the museum of Mr. Richard Green, apothecary here, who told me he was proud of being a relation of Dr. Johnson's. It was truly a wonderful collection, both of antiquities and natural curiosities, and ingenious works of art. He had all

the articles accurately arranged, with their names upon labels, printed at his own little press; and on the staircase leading to it was a board, with the names of contributors marked in gold letters. A printed catalogue of the collection was to be had at a book-seller's. Johnson expressed his admiration of the activity and diligence and good fortune of Mr. Green in getting together, in his situation, so great a variety of things; and Mr. Green told me that Johnson once said to him, 'Sir, I should as soon have thought of building a man of war as of collecting such a museum.' Mr. Green's obliging alacrity in showing it was very pleasing. His engraved portrait, with which he has favoured me, has a motto truly characteristical of his disposition, '*Nemo sibi vivat.*'

A physician being mentioned who had lost his practice, because his whimsically changing his religion had made people distrustful of him, I maintained that this was unreasonable, as religion is unconnected with medical skill. JOHNSON: 'Sir, it is not unreasonable; for when people see a man absurd in what they understand, they may conclude the same of him in what they do not understand. If a physician were to take to eating of horse-flesh nobody would employ him; though one may eat horse-flesh, and be a very skilful physician. If a man were educated in an absurd religion, his continuing to profess it would not hurt him, though his changing to it would.'¹

We drank tea and coffee at Mr. Peter Garrick's, where was Mrs. Aston, one of the maiden sisters of

¹ [Fothergill, a Quaker, and Schomberg, a Jew, had the greatest practice of any two physicians of their time.—B.]

Mrs. Walmsley, wife of Johnson's first friend, and sister also of the lady of whom Johnson used to speak with the warmest admiration, by the name of Molly Aston, who was afterwards married to Captain Brodie of the navy.

END OF VOL. III

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